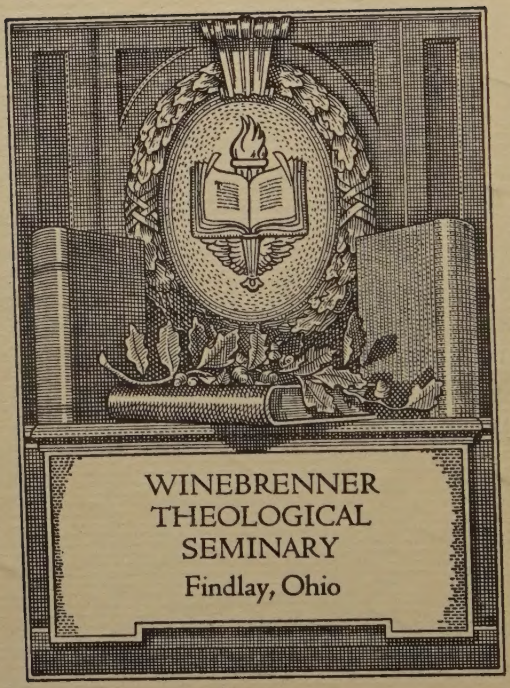

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ERASMUS THE REFORMER

"The Reformation that has been, is Luther's monument: perhaps the Reformation that is to be, will trace itself back to Erasmus."

BEARD.

ERASMUS
THE REFORMER

A STUDY IN RESTATEMENT

BEING THE HULSEAN LECTURES DELIVERED
BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
FOR 1921–1922

BY

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36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

First Published in 1923

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

DEDICATED

TO THE MEMORY OF

MANDELL CREIGHTON

AND

JOHN NEVILLE FIGGIS

MASTER AND DISCIPLE

BY THE AUTHOR

WHO WOULD CLAIM IN ALL HUMILITY

TO BE

THE DISCIPLE OF BOTH

81- 1253

PREFACE

STUDIES of the Reformation period which seek to relate it to modern times are most frequently undertaken in connexion with the problem of reunion—the present lectures were designed to be a contribution to the solution of that of restatement. The two problems are not, however, so distinct as might at first appear, since the more clearly and simply the faith is stated the more readily will it be fitted to serve as a basis for reunion.

The readjustment of the religious life which took place in the sixteenth century was in part administrative, in part moral, and in part intellectual. The religious readjustment which is required to-day is primarily intellectual.

An intellectual readjustment like any other reforming movement may adopt one of two methods; it may be either revolutionary or conservative. The former method not seldom involves a distinct breach with the past; the latter whilst rejecting corruptions and abuses, attempts to preserve and to carry over into the new, all that is true and of good report in the old. In the Reformation period we are able to perceive examples of both methods, and to perceive them working under conditions which are sufficiently like those of the present to enable us to grasp the good qualities which

respectively mark them, and also to perceive their inherent limitations. Erasmus and Luther, the constitutional reformer and the revolutionary, each has had an innumerable company of imitators from his own day until now, even as they themselves in their turn were reproductions of yet earlier prototypes. For reformers of all ages are linked together by a secret influence, and although fighting on diverse fronts and with different weapons, seem partakers in a common struggle for freedom. Not alone to the patriot venturing all for the sake of national liberty, but also to the humble scholar making his protest on behalf of truth, comes the conviction that the great and good of all ages are no mere idle spectators of his combat, but that unseen to mortal eye they fight by his side, he knows assuredly that when the trumpet sounds for the battle "the tombs are uncovered, the dead come from far."

Some years ago Dr. Hodgkin, musing upon the life of Erasmus, put this question to himself: "What would the Reformation have been like if it had been kept in the hands of scholars and men of the *juste milieu* like Erasmus, and had not fallen into the hands of Luther, when he distended his huge Wittenberg lungs and brought Theology like a flood down upon Europe?" His answer was "that without Luther's passionate narrowness there never would have been a Reformation at all" (see *Life and Letters of Thomas Hodgkin*, by Louise Creighton, pp. 203 f.). Whether this verdict is just or whether, as Bishop Creighton thought, "the new learning would have modified men's attitude towards

dogma without causing a breach of the unity of the Church" (*Life* i., pp. 266 f.) is a question which cannot be answered with any certainty; but it suggests its own warning for to-day. Speaking for myself I cannot but feel that in contemporary reforming movements there is no lack of the spirit of Luther; what is wanting is a greater measure of the wisdom and forbearance of Erasmus.

> "Old things need not be therefore true,
> O brother men, nor yet the new;
> Ah! still awhile the old retain,
> And yet consider it again!"

The Church is not a dead machine but a living organism; a surgical operation should be resorted to only when the organism is incapable by its own vitality of throwing off that which is incommoding it. In removing an apparently obsolete portion of the faith there may be real danger of permanently injuring the health of the whole body.

I hope that it will not be thought that my sympathy with the policy of Erasmus has led me, in Lecture II, to give an unfair presentation of the character of Luther. In one sense it is admittedly an unfair presentation, since the necessities of the case have made it an incomplete one; and what there appears is undoubtedly to be qualified by a remembrance of his unflinching boldness and of the many virtues of his private life. It may be thought that in my treatment of him I have allowed the good to be passed over and have emphasized the evil, thus offending against Mark Antony's

golden rule; but in spite of Shakespeare, in dealing with the great men of bygone times, it is often the evil which has to be exhibited and denounced, lest by reason of its fair and noble setting it should become a snare to lesser souls and the means of their perdition.

In his Hulsean Lectures for 1908–9, Dr. Figgis pointed out that whereas in the nineteenth century men gave up Christianity and were "sad," they were then giving up "Jesus as Lord" and were "glad." [1] In other words, he showed that Christianity was no longer a religion standing by itself, but that it had rivals with whom it must contend for the homage of religiously minded humanity. Unless I am much mistaken there has been during the last dozen years a still further development, the Church has now not only to fear rivals, but even appropriators; it has to compete with movements and teachers who claim, consciously or not, to be able to offer an interpretation of the gospel (or even some deeper philosophy in which the gospel itself is absorbed) which is superior to that of the authorized expositors of the faith. In part such attempts are by no means entirely novel, witness Matthew Arnold's similar endeavour; what is new is the much more ambitious scale upon which such attempts are now planned and the more eager welcome which awaits them, sometimes in quarters where any response to their appeal would not in the least have been suspected. It is this phenomenon which urges, one might almost say constrains, the Church to bestir itself to engage

[1] *The Gospel and Human Needs*, pp. 6 ff.

in the task of presenting Christianity in terms of contemporary thought. No other body can relieve the Church of this duty, for the Church alone possesses the right, officially, to undertake it; the "goodwill" of Christianity is in her hands; others, however successful their productions may seem to be, merely borrow, or even infringe, the trade-mark.

In the following lectures the principal object which I have set before myself has been to provide material from a study of the past which will be available for those best qualified for the task of solving the problems of the present. In the collection and arrangement of my material such problems have always been in my mind even when there has been no direct reference to them; I trust, however, that I have been sufficiently on my guard to avoid that most "grievous fault in a historian," as Archbishop Benson has termed it,[1] the reading back of the present into the past.

The original function of the Hulsean Lecturer was to make manifest "the truth and excellence of Christianity"; and to expound "some of the more difficult texts or obscure parts of the Holy Scriptures"; of recent years the lecturer has been given a much wider choice of subject in his defence of the Christian revelation. This defence, however, would not appear to be served best by an attempt to discover new matter in a period already well worked over; and such has not been my object. But although I have no wish to lay claim to having made any original contribution

[1] *Cyprian*, p. ix.

to the history of the period with which the lectures deal, I would yet assure the general reader—I hope the fact will be sufficiently obvious to the specialist—that what I have said is based on a careful study of first-hand authorities (in particular the writings of Erasmus himself) and of the various modern works dealing with it.

The life and writings of Erasmus, I am fully convinced, contain the record of a teacher whose message has a predominant value for the present age. The value of this message consists, however, not so much in the actual contents of the writings, as in the spirit in which they were composed. Erasmus saw that continuity with the past must not be broken, however much the natural man might grow impatient in the face of tolerated abuses and ancient superstitions. It is in this same spirit that a recent writer has with marked ability restated the whole problem. "Christianity is not and cannot be the same thing as civilization. Just as it has a supernatural creed, so it has a supernatural life. That life it derives from its Master, and its Master's secret is dying to live. It is not for a writer in a newspaper to say how the power of that stern and sublime secret is not to be lost in the larger and more liberal conception of life, but rather given new and greater application. Perhaps we shall find that the meaning of the Cross is inexhaustible, and it is not concerned only with acts consciously done in the service of others. But there are fields of inquiry which it must be left to divines to explore. The object of such a paper as this is to point out the

problems to be faced, not to provide their solution; to raise questions rather than to answer them. Indeed, the answers will certainly not come to-morrow, or the next day. The only thing about them, perhaps, which we can be sure of beforehand is that the Christianity of the future will not be exactly that of the past, yet will not disavow its essential features. The old is always dying and the new being born, but there is no breach of continuity. The new could not be born except of the old, and the old gives evidence of life not of death by being transformed into the new." [1]

Those who are familiar with the writings of Edmund Burke will doubtless recognize in the following pages in addition to several quotations not a few reminiscences; that such references should appear is not unnatural since even a scanty knowledge of the lives and works of the two men is sufficient to disclose many parallels; and of the reformer it may well be said, as it was said of the politician, that he was one who "made vast spaces in human destiny very luminous." [2]

[1] *Times Literary Supplement*, 24th March, 1922.
[2] Morley, *Burke*, p. 301.

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LECTURE I

" Tiefe Gemüter sind genötigt, in der Vergangenheit sowie in der Zukunft zu leben."—GOETHE.

" We saw Thee in Thy balmy nest,
Young dawn of our eternal day ;
We saw Thine eyes break from the East,
And chase the trembling shades away :
We saw Thee and we blest the sight,
We saw Thee by Thine own sweet light."

RICHARD CRASHAW.

" It is not from any sentimental desire of saving the honour of human nature, but from a better understanding of history, that we derive the belief that great movements originate in the deeps ; and that if there is a spring-tide, it is only because some disturbing force is present."—MARK PATTISON.

" Non fu nostra intenzion ch' a destra mano
Dei nostri successor parte sedesse,
Parte dall' altra, del popol cristiano ;
Nè che le chiavi, che mi fur concesse,
Divenisser segnacolo in vessillo,
Che contr' a i battezzati combattesse ;
Nè ch' io fossi figura di sigillo
Ai privilegi venduti e mendaci,
Ond' io sovente arrosso e disfavillo.
In vesta di pastor lupi rapaci
Si veggion di quassù per tutti i paschi :
O difesa di Dio, perchè pur giaci ? "

DANTE, *Paradiso*, c. 27.

ERASMUS THE REFORMER

LECTURE I

THE TIMES OF ERASMUS

We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what thou hast done in their time of old.—PSALM xliv. 1.

To state that history is ever repeating itself is to give utterance to a truism, and yet to a truism which is also a paradox. The statement is a paradox inasmuch as history never can repeat itself, and an opportunity once allowed to pass away cannot be recovered; yet none, I suppose, would be prepared to deny the substantial justice of the poet's words that "the past usurps us and the dead replay their tragedy on our fleshly stage." Hence it not seldom happens that to those who have the requisite gifts of sympathy and imagination there come from the study of the past help and guidance in playing a part, and that not an altogether useless one, in the drama of their own times. In an age such as that in which we find ourselves, when all things on earth and beyond it seem uncertain and changing, when even straight lines are no longer straight, nor Euclid himself infallible, it is of the essence of our common salvation that what has gone before should not be allowed to lapse into

nothingness, that the many lessons of the past, especially as they are to be read at similar periods of transition, should not be ignored.

I

Erasmus was born on the night of the 27th or the early morning of the 28th of October, 1466,[1] in the very middle of that great series of changes by which the modern world was gradually evolved from the age which preceded it. He was thus both a child of the Renaissance and a forerunner of the Reformation.

Regarded in its totality the period stands revealed as one of unrest and expansion; in every department of man's life a new creative energy is seen to be at work; some peculiar manifestation of "a general excitement and enlightening of the human mind"[2] which recalls the sun-swept days of an older civilization. For our present purposes it will be necessary to elaborate this statement and to trace its applicability to the various spheres of man's activity; for the sake of clearness we will arrange them under five heads: the intellectual, the geographic, the economic, the political, and the ecclesiastical.

(1) In days gone by it was commonly taken for granted that the Renaissance was the product almost solely of a revival of Greek thought, of a renewed study of the literature of Hellas. I cannot help thinking that such an assumption is not entirely justified; and that it would be more accurate to say that men found in

[1] See Note A, p. 113.
[2] Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. xiii.

Greek culture a ready-made form of expression for hopes and ideals which had arisen almost spontaneously in their own bosoms, that it was a moulding rather than an originating force. In his *Philosophy of History*[1] Hegel compared Egyptian art to its own statue of Memnon, waiting for the coming of the dawn that would give it utterance; in some such way had the men of the later Middle Ages been waiting—unconsciously, perhaps, but by no means without preparation—for the rise of a new form of culture.[2] But whatever may be the office which we assign to Greek culture in regard to the Renaissance the true inwardness of the movement cannot really be understood unless it be conceived of primarily as "the blossoming and unfolding of the mind of the Italian people."[3]

What, it may be asked, was the immediate effect of the Renaissance upon religion, and what attitude did the leaders of thought adopt towards the Church? The New Learning was by no means opposed to the old religious system which had come down from the Middle Ages; many of its exponents were, in name at least, orthodox Catholics, and a strong sympathy with humanistic ideas was not unknown even in occupants of the throne of St. Peter himself. But eventually it proved to be an element of disruption and the faith of Italy was gradually weakened by a process which was almost imperceptible. Of direct attacks there were practically none; the revived paganism of the

[1] Eng. trans., p. 208.
[2] See Note B, p. 114.
[3] Professor F. X. Kraus in *Camb. Mod. Hist.* ii., p. 3.

so-called Roman Academy was but the whim of an offended scholar, and even the exposure of the Donation of Constantine by Lorenzo Valla was not considered a bar to his employment at the Papal court. But the rigidity of the older system was bound to be abhorrent to the freedom-loving scholars of the Renaissance, and men who had come to despise the present and all connected with it made no exception in favour of religion; their eyes were so dazzled by the newly discovered glories of the world around them that they forgot the eternal splendours of the world to come. Christianity in the eyes of many of them only became respectable when forced into the mould of classical and pagan forms of expression.[1]

One great department of knowledge, that of Natural Science, did not during the lifetime of Erasmus reveal any notable sign of its future eminence and usefulness. The main influence of the Renaissance be it remembered was Latin culture, and Latin culture, as distinguished from Greek, is rhetorical rather than scientific; hence "the science of that age was all clairvoyance, divination, unsubjected to our exact modern formulas, seeking in an instant of vision to concentrate a thousand experiences."[2] Astronomy, it is true, was a subject upon which there was much practical knowledge diffused

[1] Cf. Erasmus, *Ciceronians:* "Patres conscripti" was put in the place of "Sancti apostoli," "Jupiter optimus maximus" in that of "Jesus Christus redemptor mundi." An excommunicated person was said to be "interdicted both fire and water." Gregorovius has pointed out that the allegorical figure on the tomb of Sixtus IV, which purports to represent Theology, is really Diana with her bow and quiver (*Die Grabmäler der Päpste*, S. 112).

[2] Pater, op. cit., p. 110.

amongst the multitude, more even than in our own day; it could hardly be otherwise when the rising and setting of constellations marked the passage of time. The new era, however, which dates from Copernicus had not yet arisen.[1]

Before leaving the subject of the New Learning some attention ought to be devoted to that art which was its ready handmaid. When printing first arose the humanists despised it as barbarous and unworthy of a scholar's attention; even to this day, as Lord Morley recently pointed out, it has never received its due meed of praise.[2] Its importance for the spread of the new ideas, both of culture and of religion, cannot be exaggerated. Erasmus himself was one of the first who perceived its value, and in a well-known epigram he paid his tribute: "The library of Ptolemy," he says, "was contained within the walls of a house, but Aldus is constructing a library which shall have no limits but those of the world."[3] One effect of printing upon letters was to give to the scholar an independent position and in part to do away with the necessity of patronage.

[1] Copernicus was born in 1473 and died 1543.

[2] "The story of the printing press has been mostly ignored even by scholars. Yet the doings of Robert Estienne in Paris, of Aldus Manutius, Giolito, and the rest of them in Venice, in the fifteenth century, are marked events in the annals of learning; and the history of typography is a chapter of literature."
(*Recollections* i., p. 34).

[3] Quoted by Drummond, *Erasmus* i., p. 288. The Papacy soon recognized the possible dangers of the new invention, and an abortive decree of the Lateran Council of 1515 tried to regulate and control it. As late as the end of the same century we find St. Francis de Sales denouncing the presses of Geneva for their part in the Calvinist propaganda. See Mark Pattison, *Isaac Casaubon* p. 191).

There is a striking contrast between the early life of Erasmus with its continual series of degrading appeals to the great and wealthy for doles, and the later period when the sale of his books enabled him to exist in greater security; though even then it has to be confessed he still continued to receive large pensions from private patrons.

(2) The revival of learning was an expansion in the world of thought wherein discoveries were made by adventurous souls, who, leaving behind them the shores of the obvious, began the search after fresh dominions of the mind. The same period witnessed a similar search, a similar expansion of the spirit, as Hegel would call it, in the material, geographical world. The motives which inspired some of the explorers were not of the highest, nor would their conduct have satisfied the demands of modern international law—Drake and our English adventurers were for the most part simply pirates plundering the peaceful ships of a technically friendly power—it was in Henley's words:

> "an age of blood and gold
> An age of shipmen scoundrelly and bold."

Yet there is much that is attractive about these men; and in not a few cases the voyages were definitely undertaken for the greater glory of God and in order that the bounds of His earthly kingdom might be enlarged and fresh races pay to Him their tardy homage.

The interest for most minds, however, tends almost inevitably to centre round some single outstanding figure. We think of Columbus

and his lonely keels ploughing their hazardous way across the trackless Atlantic; of Henry the Navigator—the namesake and nephew of our own Henry IV [1]—standing on some promontory of Portugal and gazing towards the distant horizon across which his daring and faithful captains had sailed in search of new Eldorados. Or, perhaps, we let our thoughts wander to the voyages themselves, each marked by the discovery of some world-famous river; Gambia, Niger, Congo; reaching a climax when at last Vasco da Gama doubled the Cape and burst into the unknown seas beyond.

But if these adventures had their romantic side, none the less they brought about a revolution in commerce, as Venice was one day to learn to her cost.

The task of Vasco da Gama had been far greater than that of Columbus, and its immediate effect was correspondingly greater. Attempts to discover a western route to the Indies had long been discouraged by Venice for obvious reasons; now it had been found, not as men had imagined across the Atlantic, but round the southern end of Africa. Henceforth the main trade routes of the world would no longer lie along the Mediterranean; no longer would the laden caravans wend their toilsome way across the deserts of Egypt or Syria to the waiting vessels at Alexandria or Beyrout; but merchandise would be borne direct from India and even China to the ports of Western and Northern Europe.

(3) The discovery of a new world containing

[1] He was the son of John II of Portugal by Philippa of Lancaster.

almost unlimited wealth and the alteration in the trade routes naturally caused great economic unsettlement. Hitherto money had been relatively uncommon, and since wealth existed mostly in kind, trading on any large scale was very difficult. But when the mines of South America began to be worked all was changed, and so great was the supply that the few European mines practically closed down. The immense influx of treasure from her colonies ought to have made Spain rich and powerful beyond all her rivals; but owing to mistaken economic theories and inability to take advantage of the favourable situation, other nations reaped the principal benefits.[1] The effect in Spain, and gradually throughout Europe, was to quicken an increase in the price of necessities which had already begun; as a consequence there followed great unrest amongst the poorer classes who found their desire for a higher standard of living perpetually thwarted.

In the Middle Ages trade had been carried on upon a small scale only and under burdensome restrictions, Dr. Cunningham has described it as "intermunicipal rather than international," [2] but with the widening of geographical boundaries and the removal of burdensome restrictions great developments soon took place. Hitherto there had been only a small place in the ecomonic system for the investor; increased opportunities for trading and heavier responsibilities demanded increased capital and the help of those who were not immediately con-

[1] See Note C, p. 116.
[2] *Camb. Mod. Hist.* i., pp. 496 ff.

cerned in the management of the particular commercial undertaking.[1]

Along with this tremendous revolution in industry, and indeed as a consequence of it, there arose an entirely new conception of economic life. In the Middle Ages, with its simpler organization, the all-important factor in economics was the relation of persons; in our complicated and highly specialized modern system, persons are almost lost sight of, and what really counts is the manufacture and exchange of things. In other words economics has ceased to be a department of ethics, and from an art has become a science; by its laws man is subordinated to wealth, and consumption to production.[2]

(4) Turning now to the world of politics we have to notice the beginnings of two great features of the modern world; the growth of nationality, and the recognition of the rights and the value of individuals.

During the Middle Ages the separate nations of Europe regarded themselves as parts of a single political and ecclesiastical organization (*einen einzigen weltlichgeistlichen Staat*), a condition of affairs which Ranke held to be essential to the naturalization of Christianity in the West.[3] At the beginning of the Renaissance the decay of the feudal system announced the coming break-up of this vast organization. Its

[1] The increase of commerce and trade had relatively a bad effect on agricultural conditions, since these, except in England and to a lesser degree in Holland, remained almost unchanged.

[2] Cf. G. O'Brien, *Mediæval Economic Teaching*, pp. 8 ff. See Note D, p. 116.

[3] *Die römischen Päpste* i., S. 23 (Eng. Trans., p. 26).

decay was especially rapid in Italy, which became in consequence a favourite experimenting ground for new forms of government. But Italy was entirely wanting in any real national feeling—even the invasion of Charles VIII had failed to unite its separate factions—and was moreover divided up into a number of small rival powers no one of which was strong enough to subdue the rest.[1] In Spain, in England, and in France, the ruling dynasty, especially when the great feudatories had been exterminated or reduced, became the centre of the nation's life and the organ of its protest against all external interference whether political or ecclesiastical.

But this decentralizing tendency was further exemplified by the growing realization of the existence not merely of separate nations, but also of individual men. In the Middle Ages "man was conscious of himself only as a member of a race, people, party, family, or corporation,"[2] but that was all to be changed, henceforward his rights and value as a person were to be increasingly respected and acknowledged.[3]

These changes in political organization and thought reacted appreciably on religion. The growing realization of national feeling, for example, with its resulting jealousies had been perhaps the most potent factor in wrecking the Conciliar Movement; so, too, the break-up of

[1] See Note E, p. 117.

[2] Burckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance* (Eng. Trans.), p. 129.

[3] The growing demand for novels which is one of the features of the literary development of the times can be regarded as an interesting manifestation of this same tendency to feel the value of obscure and unknown people merely as individuals.

the Holy Roman Empire undoubtedly prepared men's minds for the break-up of the Holy Roman Church, more especially in Germany where an awakening national consciousness greatly helped the Reformers.

(5) From the political we now turn to the ecclesiastical sphere. By the time of Erasmus the papacy had become almost completely secularized, and it might seem that the only just way of estimating or judging the various Popes themselves is by the standard of contemporary Italian despots.[1] Their persistence, however, in claiming to be the successors of St. Peter, a simple fisherman, gave those who disapproved of their luxury and dissipation, a ready weapon against them. Erasmus, for example, in commenting on the statement in Acts ix. 43 that Peter lodged with one Simon a tanner, remarks that his successors would not be contented with less than three royal palaces.[2]

So far had the spiritual responsibilities of the office been forgotten that on more than one occasion the papacy was actually sold to the highest bidder ;[3] and the Emperor Maximilian could actually conceive and nourish the idea of amalgamating it with the empire in his own

[1] Professor Kraus complains that Luther, because of his lack of artistic insight, "could not see that the eminence of the Papacy consisted at that time in its leadership of Europe in the province of art." (*Camb. Mod. Hist.* ii., p. 8.)

[2] See Note F, p. 117.

[3] Creighton, *History of the Papacy* v., p. 68. A similar fate befell the empire itself on the death of Maximilian, whose bribes had secured a majority of votes for Charles V ; in spite of this arrangement, on his death the whole process of corruption had to be repeated. (See Armstrong, *The Emperor Charles V* i., p. 45.)

person, thus making himself Pontifex Maximus as well as Cæsar.[1]

(*a*) The papacy, then, was to all intents and purposes a secular state; and its organization was that of an autocracy dependent upon a crowd of officials. The weakness of this form of administration lies in the difficulty of limiting either the number of the officials or the power which they exercise. Many of the papal servants received no salary at all, some had even paid for the privilege of holding office; vested rights had thus been allowed to multiply which were a burden on any reforming pope, since he would have to choose between performing an act of injustice by abolishing the offices without compensation, or repaying the invested capital, an impossible task.[2]

Even those offices which were distinctively religious were held by quite unsuitable persons; "princes and nobles . . . though destitute of piety, learning, and vocation" were found masquerading as bishops.[3] Pluralism was so common as to be taken as a matter of course; and the work of ministering to the flock which Christ purchased with His own blood was deputed to the inferior clergy, stage by stage, until it was actually performed by those who were too poor or too conscientious to hire a substitute.[4] Such clergy as did make the

[1] If he had done so he would merely have imitated the action of Octavian who, being civil head of Rome, seized the papacy for himself in 955. He was the originator of the pontiff's taking an additional name, since he continued to administer the secular affairs under his former name, the ecclesiastical under that of John XII.

[2] See Note G, p. 118.

[3] William Barry, *Camb. Mod. Hist.* i., p. 630.

[4] See Note H, p. 118.

endeavour, for one reason or another, to carry out the Church's system found their efforts constantly thwarted, especially in the matter of discipline, by the authorities at Rome, where dispensations and pardons for almost any conceivable crime could be bought at a fixed price.

In one important respect the papacy was at a disadvantage when compared with surrounding states; the succession being elective and not hereditary was uncertain. To remedy this weakness the popes of the later Middle Ages endeavoured to found principalities for their relations, and from the "time of Sixtus IV nepotism (was) elevated into a political principle."[1]

Such were some of the abuses which disgraced the Church's administration; and yet good and pious men were not lacking to defend even such abuses, simply on the ground that as they formed part of the papal system to abolish them would seem to be a sign of weakness. If I mistake not similar arguments are advanced to-day against proposed changes in the Roman Church.[2]

(*b*) But a corrupt administration was not the worst feature of the Church of that period, and in the unworthy and sinful lives of her servants, from the popes downwards, men saw an even graver proof of desperate failure. The chief offenders, after the popes themselves,[3] were the religious orders who spread everywhere "like the veins of the body," and everywhere

[1] Creighton, op. cit. iv., p. 71.

[2] I have used the term "abuses" advisedly, and in spite of Hegel's contention that the corruption of the Church was a native growth and therefore not an "abuse." (See his *Philosophy of History*, p. 429.)

[3] See Note I, p. 119.

they carried corruption and death where once they had been the bearers of life and peace.[1] Those of the clergy who avoided bad moral lapses were often worldly and self-seeking, more interested in secular pursuits and their own advancement than in the cultivation of virtue and holiness. At so low an estimate did men hold the highest of all callings that to term anyone a clerk or a monk was the refinement of abuse.[2] Machiavelli had no very high standard of moral rectitude, his condemnation is therefore the more damaging: "We Italians," he says, "are more irreligious and corrupt than others . . . because the Church and her representatives set us the worst example." [3]

Yet widespread as the evil undoubtedly was there were still, as in our own Church in the eighteenth century, simple, God-fearing men going quietly about their duty.[4] To produce such characters has always been a mark of the Church of Christ even in the times of her deepest degradation; hence, perhaps, her continued and almost miraculous survival.

[1] It is only just to state that by the end of the fifteenth century several of the Orders, including the Augustinians, had succeeded in restoring something of their early fervour; unfortunately their good example was wasted on the secular clergy. Luther himself received much help from his superior in the Augustinian Order and it is not without significance that the rule of the Order prescribed diligent study of the Bible.

[2] The same usage inspired by the same cause can be observed amongst the Provençals in the twelfth century: "I had rather my son were a priest" was their way of putting a degrading alternative. (See Milman, *Hist. Latin Christ.* v., p. 406.) [3] *Discorsi* I., xii.

[4] An example is to be found in Erasmus' correspondent, Nicholas Ellenbog, sometime prior of the Benedictine monastery of Ottobeuren. His later life was spent in the study of Greek, Hebrew, and Astronomy. Mr. Allen tells us that his correspondence (unpublished) "gives a pleasing and intimate picture of monastic life." (*Eras. Epist.* ii., p. 209.)

(*c*) The age was one of superstition, and the clergy were as much affected by it as were their neighbours; indeed they did not a little to foster this failing and to discover new forms for its exercise. One of the most popular superstitions was a belief in astrology; even so masculine a mind as Julius II was apparently under its influence and could delay his coronation as pope until a day which promised a fortunate conjunction of stars.[1]

Amongst the vulgar multitude an accumulation of amazing beliefs was current; some of these were directly connected with the historic faith, some were mere pagan accretions which the Church had either deliberately adopted or had not chosen to condemn.[2] Such were the habits of venerating relics and of making pilgrimages to famous shrines, habits which gave the people and their spiritual guides ample opportunity for indulging the prevailing weakness.[3] Sometimes relics were of so great a value as to be purchased by a state, or to be presented by one ruler to another in return for some notable concession. An instance of the latter transaction was the presentation by the Sultan to Innocent VIII, whose friendship he greatly

[1] On another occasion, however, he ignored the advice of the astrologers—John Burchard thought, but probably mistakenly, in order to show his contempt for them—by seizing Bologna a day before that supposed to be especially auspicious. His action was almost certainly the result of sheer impatience.

[2] Heine's fanciful creation, *The Gods in Exile*, in which he represents the fallen Olympians as taking service under the new conditions with human masters has at least an element of truth in it.

[3] Erasmus has left amusing descriptions of some of the great shrines of our own country, and in his *Colloquies* certainly did much to expose the growth of abuses connected with them.

desired, of the veritable lance with which our Saviour's side was pierced. The proffered gift was at first regarded with suspicion, and since two other holy lances already existed—one at Paris, the other at Nuremberg—it was thought to be an act of derision. The pope, however, was equal to the occasion, and the Sultan's gift was received with appropriate ceremonies.

The whole tone of mind has been vividly preserved for us by Erasmus in the Colloquy entitled *The Shipwreck*.[1] The dialogue begins by describing the outbreak of a storm and the various precautions which were taken to meet the danger. At last all hope of safety having been abandoned, the mariners betook themselves to prayer. They pleaded with a being whom, in language coming down from remote times, they named the Star of the Sea, the Queen of Heaven, the Haven of Safety; terms which their heathen forefathers had used of Venus the sea-begotten, but which did not so readily apply to one who never took a voyage in her life. The passengers meanwhile were not slow to offer vows, each to his chosen protector. One man drew especial notice to himself by bawling out at the top of his voice the most generous promises to St. Christopher, pledging himself to give him a wax taper as big as his monument in Paris. An acquaintance reminding him of his inability to fulfil the contract received the whispered and ingenious reply; "Shut up, you fool, if once I get safe to shore, I won't give him a tallow dip."

[1] This Colloquy almost in its entirety has been incorporated, with striking effect, by Charles Reade, into his novel, *The Cloister and the Hearth*.

The knowledge of abuses and corruptions such as these in the mother Church of Western Christendom cannot but distress us ; as lovers of sound learning, however, we have the consolation of knowing that if the Church had not lost the respect of mankind, the substitution of the New Learning for the degraded and degenerate form of Scholasticism to which the Church was pledged would have been considerably delayed, perhaps for several generations.

II

It is not my intention in delivering this course of lectures to attempt to draw elaborate parallels between the state of religion and of culture in the present and its state in the days of Erasmus. I hope that such comparisons will inevitably be suggested by the manner in which my material is presented and arranged. In this introductory lecture, however, I desire, definitely to bring out a few points of similarity in regard to the five divisions of man's activity already mentioned.

(1) First, then, as to the New Learning. Our own age has seen a further development and application of those principles which came into renewed prominence at the Renaissance ; and this development, especially in the realm of Natural Science, goes back even more than the earlier movement to the methods, albeit much improved, of the Greeks. So much has this branch of knowledge done for learning and even for religion that the great scholar who occupied this pulpit as Hulsean Lecturer just fifty years ago could regard it as a revelation come up

from the earth to meet the revelation which had come down from heaven.[1] To endeavour to estimate even a portion of all that has been done for mankind by the great men who were the prophets of what was to Dr. Hort a new revelation is impossible here and now; one point, however, I would desire to emphasize, and that is the doctrine of the apparent unity of Nature, and therefore of knowledge; the fact that in the words of Mr. Beard "A law of Nature once established, we assume, until cause be shown to the contrary, that it is valid in the most distant star as on the earth's surface, a million years ago as now." [2]

(2) The geographical discoveries of our own day, the penetration of Central Africa, the conquest of the Northern and Southern Poles, may not prove so valuable intrinsically as those of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but they are symptoms of the same desire for expansion. A further similarity which has often been unrecognized is in the matter of motive. The enterprises of Henry the Navigator and of Christopher Columbus were inspired, as we have seen, by a desire to honour God; in the discoveries of our own age not seldom has the same motive sent out the lonely traveller on his hazardous task. In the long bede-roll of great discoverers the missionary occupies by no means the lowest place, and names like those of Krapf and Livingstone will be remembered as long as the spirit of adventure moves in the beating hearts of courageous men.

[1] Cf. Hort, *The Way, the Truth, the Life*, pp. 77 ff.
[2] *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 391.

The discovery of the Cape route by Vasco da Gama by diverting trade from the Near East destroyed the prosperity of more than one great and famous port; it has remained for the engineers of our own day to bring back that diverted stream of commerce and by the construction of the Suez Canal once more to make the Middle Sea a way for the wealthy argosies of Inde. The ultimate effect of the similar feat in the other hemisphere, the construction of the Panama Canal, as yet remains unknown.

Our age has been called the age of the steam engine,[1] and but for the discovery of the powers of steam the extension of our knowledge of the earth's surface would not have been possible. At the same time the earth, through this and other similar inventions, whilst it has been made more vast has been made more accessible; improved means of transit and communication have combined to reduce its limits until the merchant in London is in many ways nearer to a customer in Tokyo than was his grandfather to a client in the North of Scotland. Seldom has there been such a revolution in a single generation. In the early years of the last century the speed of the horse set the pace of the world. "No news could travel faster than a horse could go, nor could any communications be made faster than a horse could carry them. We all know that when Sir Robert Peel posted home from Rome, as hard as he could go, at

[1] "In thousands of years . . . the steam-engine, and the procession of inventions of every kind that accompanied it, will perhaps be spoken of as we speak of the bronze or of the chipped stone of prehistoric times: it will serve to define an age." (Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, p. 146.)

the summons of his Sovereign, to undertake a Cabinet, he travelled from Rome to London in just the same time as Julius Cæsar would have done it." (*Autobiography of Robert Gregory*, p. 257.)

(3) The change in economic conditions has been just as remarkable, and many changes no doubt are yet to come. Capitalism, which saw its small beginnings in the Middle Ages, has grown to vast proportions, and in the great trusts threatens to become almost a menace to civilization itself. In not a few quarters the whole industrial system is condemned as un-Christian and obsolete. But though the capitalist system may give the few an opportunity of exploiting the many, yet to abolish it would be to deal with symptoms only; we have no guarantee that in some more ideal system the same terrible disease would not break out with fresh power. Such a warning is necessary, for so long as men are selfish and grasping no system can be perfect; this fact, however, must not be made an excuse for discouraging cautious experiments towards finding a better basis for commercial life than the present reliance on the driving power of competition. The neglect to apply Christian principles is doubtless the ultimate cause of all unrest in the industrial world, and it will be more and more a barrier to the spread of our faith amongst the thinking races of the non-Christian world. A faith which cannot be applied to some of the most important functions of human life can never become universal and all-satisfying.[1]

[1] See Note J, p. 119.

(4) Turning now to the political world we find many changes of great interest which might be noticed and enlarged upon if we had the necessary time. Most interesting of all perhaps is the development in the conception of Nationality, that foundation of all higher life as Hegel called it, and the almost universal desire of each nation to be allowed to fulfil its own destiny with the minimum of outside interference. The last century saw the realization of Greek independence, and of Italian unity, as well as the formation of the German Empire. But events more recent still have taught us—we had apparently forgotten France under Napoleon —that Nationality in itself may be a dangerous thing, and that crimes may be done in its name which would be considered, even by those who commit them, unpardonable in any other cause. Nations have still to learn that their gifts, like the gifts of individuals, are to be developed not for any merely selfish end, but for the good of the whole race ; we need a higher patriotism. Nations cannot be permitted nor should they desire to realize their own aspirations at the expense of their neighbours. A new spirit of internationalism is abroad and signs of its presence can be found in the League of Nations and in America's breaking through the long isolation of a hundred years.[1]

Within the several nations themselves there has been almost everywhere a growing recognition of the duty of the state to provide for the welfare both of the minds and the bodies of

[1] The present Bishop of Manchester has made some wise and interesting remarks on this subject in *Mens Creatrix*, pp. 243 ff., cf. also p. 326.

its citizens—the provision for the latter was perhaps in its origin merely a recognition of the need for "cannon-fodder." This development is not unaccompanied by serious dangers, for the feeling of responsibility on the part of parents and others not unnaturally becomes weakened as their duties are gradually taken over by local or national authorities. The spread of education has also been far-reaching in consequences, leading as it has done to the demand for a more extensive franchise and for a wider representation of all classes in both municipal and parliamentary government.

More than a hundred years ago Condorcet prophesied that "the equalization of the rights of men and women would be one of the most important and beneficial features of progress in the future." This prophecy has received an almost complete fulfilment, and one of the most striking features of recent social and political history has been the recognition of woman's true place in the Commonwealth as the comrade and equal—though diverse—of man. The consequences of this recognition we have not yet fully worked out, nor the limitations to which it must be subject.

(5) Lastly we come to the state of the Church. What demands does the new situation make upon her and how is she fitted to meet them? Into details of the abuses and corruptions of the Church, real or imaginary, I am not prepared to enter; nor is it necessary to do so since they are proclaimed on all hands by friends and foes alike. As to the former, one may perhaps be permitted to observe that they are

somewhat strangely lacking in reticence; they forget the greed of the modern journalist for sensational copy, and the consequent habit of misrepresentation and ignoring of proportion, a habit which because it is often unconscious is none the less dangerous.

It may suffice to admit that there are in the Church's system, as practised and understood by the bulk of her members, still many surviving superstitions. Most of these are opinions and practices, beautiful in themselves and helpful in the devotional life, but dangerous because based on unworthy ideas of God and His universe. Eventually these must all go, for truth is absolute, and does not admit of two standards of veracity, one for the scientist and another for the theologian; but I do not doubt that in the majority of such cases it will be found that the real utility or beauty of the opinion or practice lies deeper than had been supposed and that it will be possible to purge away what is superstitious and harmful and to retain what is good. The process of purgation is a protracted one and meanwhile fresh superstitions are constantly reappearing, both within and without the Church. It seems as if the ever-changing ocean of man's mind as it ebbs and flows "around earth's human shores," like a busy tide casts up from time to time the broken wreckage of ancient systems and ways of thought—survivals from an age almost forgotten.

The truth of the matter is, to quote from a novel by one of our greatest living writers, that "the world is engaged in finding a stable faith

to replace the old one. It is wavering between science and superstition, neither of which will allow a compromise." [1]

III

The situation which thus arises is the cause of great perplexity in the minds of many; for they imagine that the walls of the city of God which hitherto had seemed so strong and so eternal have been undermined; and not only so, but that the train which will send them sky-high is just about to be fired. It is a moment of horror, especially for the inexperienced; but there is nothing new about it, from the very first the Church has been facing just such moments. As Mr. Chesterton says, "Faith is always at a disadvantage; it is a perpetually defeated thing which survives all its conquerors. The desperate modern talk about dark days and reeling altars, and the end of Gods and angels is the oldest talk in the world: lamentations over the growth of agnosticism can be found in the monkish sermons of the dark ages; horror at youthful impiety can be found in the Iliad."[2]

Sometimes those outside look on with a kind of melancholy pleasure; this was especially the case in the last century when Matthew Arnold

[1] John Masefield, *Multitude and Solitude*, pp. 133 f.

[2] *Watts*, p. 101. Cf. also J. N. Figgis, *The Gospel and Human Needs* (Hulsean Lectures, 1908–9), p. 17: "The Church goes on. . . . Its adversaries have demolished it a thousand times in argument and pronounced the Christian Church a dead thing, and cried to carry out the corpse, for all was over but the shouting. And they have betaken themselves to shouting, only to find when it was all over that the slain hydra had raised a new head, and all was to do again."

was the prophet of a generation which Lord Acton once described as "distracted between the intense need of believing and the difficulty of belief";[1] that generation has passed, and now because men have lost the anxiety to believe, the pensive music of *Obermann once more* and *Dover Beach* no longer makes the same appeal.[2]

(1) The nineteenth century was austere and earnest, full of ideals; and because its faith was weak it clung all the harder to Christian ethics. Our own century, even before the glare of war lit up its failings, showed signs of a strong reaction; we were, and we are, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of good; somewhat disillusioned by the failure of our fathers to carry out their high ideals, and afraid of the burden of their respectability with all that it entailed; obsessed with the futility of existence, and lacking in the sense of responsibility because unwilling to exercise our powers on small tasks.

(2) But we have, I am convinced, yet to reap the harvest of the war, the fruit from the good seed so lavishly and so pitilessly sown; nor must we be discouraged if the tares spring up before the wheat. The present age is one of dissatisfaction and unsettlement because it has undergone rich experiences, in the world of

[1] In *George Eliot's Life*, reprinted in *Hist. Essays and Studies*, p. 303.

[2] Stephen Paget has some illuminating remarks on this change of attitude in the introduction to *Henry Scott Holland*, p. v. "I hope that I have not done wrong to make free use of R. L. Nettleship's letters," he says; "they belong to a time when differences of belief were taken gravely, as a tragedy, which now are taken lightly, as a comedy." On this subject Dr. Figgis is, as always, profoundly enlightening (cf. op. cit., pp. 3 ff.)

thought and of action alike, for which it has not hitherto found any adequate means of expression. Emotionally we are gradually adjusting ourselves to our new needs, even in religion, but the intellectual adjustment still lags behind. Here is the call to restatement. Theology must find room within her ample folds for the explanation of all things ; for all things concern her, and she concerns herself with all things—hence indeed the continual need for fresh expressions of the faith, in which new knowledge may be received and related to the old. In former times, at each great advance of human thought, a religion fell dead and vanished away ; Christianity survives because it is capable of adjusting itself to new conditions.[1]

(3) According to the judgment of Erasmus much of the evil of his time was due to Folly, the force which controlled the minds of men. The same is true of conditions to-day. What is troubling us is not only original sin, but also, to adopt a term used by a recent writer, " aboriginal stupidity " ; [2] this I take to mean the devoting of life, by reason of ignorance or confusion, to unworthy and unsatisfying objects of desire. Our belief in the future of the race and in the final victory of righteousness depends ultimately on the assurance that men will choose the highest if only they can be convinced that it is the highest. We need an ideal which is not merely emotional but also intellectual, a deep and reasoned conviction that life is more than mere living, an acknowledgment in thought and in conduct of the supremacy of the spiritual.

[1] See *Letters of J. R. Green*, p. 118. [2] *The Glass of Fashion*, p. 164.

LECTURE II

"A Man has as much Right to use his own Understanding, in judging of Truth; as he has a Right to use his own Eyes, to see his way: therefore it is no offence to another, that any man uses his own Right."

BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE.[1]

"blind authority beating with his staff
The child that might have led him."

WORDSWORTH.

"The Protestant Churches replaced Papal infallibility by a not less stern and uncompromising dogmatism, and claimed and exercised the right of punishing the heretic as unhesitatingly as the Inquisition itself."

MARK PATTISON.

θεὸς μὲν αἰτίαν φύει βροτοῖς,
ὅταν κακῶσαι δῶμα παμπήδην θέλῃ.

ÆSCHYLUS fragt.

"Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change."

TENNYSON.

[1] Rector of North Cadbury, 1643–49.

LECTURE II

THE WAY OF REVOLUTION

Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord.—2 KINGS x. 16.

THE miserable state to which the Church had been reduced at the end of the fifteenth century was the result of a gradual decline. That such a decline was taking place had been recognized for several generations, and voices had been raised, some sincere, some merely turbulent, demanding reform, as the phrase went, "in head and members."

I

(1) A reformation, be it political, religious, or intellectual, may follow one of two methods; it may be either revolutionary or constitutional. The former method not seldom involves an almost complete breach with the past; and demands for its successful achievement, the adoption of extreme measures; such measures often enough mean popular tumult and the destruction of much that is of real and permanent value. "Speed and violence are essential to the success of a revolution." [1]

(2) A constitutional reformation, on the other hand, attempts to preserve all that is good in

[1] Armstrong, op. cit. i., p. 94.

the past, and to purify it from corruptions and abuses by a process which because it is orderly, must of necessity be slow, and will almost certainly remain incomplete. In the sixteenth century these two methods of reform were represented respectively by Luther and by Erasmus.

II

Luther himself began as a constitutional reformer; the logic of circumstance, and defects in his own character gradually forced him to adopt a revolutionary position. In his early days he had no desire for publicity or notoriety, and his protest against the sale of indulgences was only made after "much hesitation and deep distress of mind"; it was made, moreover, in the firm belief that he was acting for the honour of the Church and that his efforts would receive the sympathy and support of those in authority.[1] As late as October, 1518, he implored Cajētān's good offices with the Pope "that he do not cast into darkness a soul which is only seeking the light of truth and is most ready to give way, to change and revoke everything, when it has been taught how they are to be understood differently."[2]

(1) It has been stated as an axiom that "Rebels usually begin to fight under a false flag";[3] there are some who deny that Luther was one of the exceptions for which the state-

[1] Cf. Jourdan, *Catholic Reform in the Early XVI Century*, p. 208.
[2] De Wette, *Luther's Briefe* i., pp. 149 f. quoted by Creighton, *History of the Papacy* vi., p. 96.
[3] Armstrong, op. cit. i., p. 88. There is no reference to Luther express or implied in the original context.

ment provides. Ultimately he became a rebel against the heads of the Church it is true, yet for my own part I cannot but admit his absolute sincerity at every stage of his gradually developing Protestantism.

A recent poet has told us that even

> "solid men for all their passion, live
> But as the outrageous stars incline
> By opposition."[1]

This is true of Luther, for it was the light-hearted and scornful treatment which he received from Rome which forced him into open enmity, and the German people with him. We have here an illustration of Burke's great principle that "general rebellions and revolts of a whole people never were encouraged . . . they are always provoked." [2]

The pope with whom he had at first to deal was Leo X; his elevation to the pontifical throne at this crisis has been described by a Roman Catholic historian as "a severe trial permitted by God to overtake Christendom."[3] Leo was a well-meaning ruler with a real desire to do his best for those over whom he exercised authority; but unfortunately he had little or no interest in the spiritual responsibilities of his office, these were subordinated almost entirely to political ambition and love of power. Moreover, he had a natural aptitude for the unprincipled diplomacy of his time, and a confidence in his own good fortune which amounted almost to fatalism.

[1] W. B. Yeats, *The Wild Swans at Coole*, p. 7.
[2] *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol* quoted by Morley, *Burke*, p. 244.
[3] L. Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste* (English trans.) viii., p. 4.

In the controversy over Reuchlin, Leo had not been without sympathy for a persecuted scholar, as became one who was a patron of the New Learning ; in the case of Luther, which in its initial stages was also an appeal to sound learning and a demand for its application to a disputed point in theology, a similar forbearance might have been anticipated. But the question of indulgences, though it might not affect the deeper matters of the Catholic faith, threatened something which to Leo and his advisers was even more dear—the papal treasury.

Almost every step taken by Rome to bring the trouble to an end was an error ; it seemed as if some malignant power were deliberately compelling the Pope to throw away the allegiance of Germany. Leo himself, with his treacherous, lying ways, was the last man in the world to have dealings with the Augustinian monk whose faults and weaknesses, many though they might be, were accompanied by an absolute sincerity and desire for the truth. The artful schemes and contradictory promises by which the Pope was accustomed to deceive his political rivals and even his own agents, roused only bitterness in the minds of the German people whose point of view he failed utterly to realize. This failure to measure the importance of the danger which threatened the papacy and to understand the German temperament may be illustrated by the papal agents chosen to carry on the necessary negotiations.[1] Almost without exception they treated Luther and his writings

[1] See Note A, p. 120.

with the utmost contempt, or else demanded an unconditional surrender. Tetzel was a blind enthusiast with little scruple in the use of means so long as the end was attained; Cajētān was a narrow-minded official whose one cry was submission to lawful authority; Eck was a petted gladiator anxious for fresh laurels. Miltitz, it is true, nearly brought about a reconciliation; but all his work was undone by the neglect of the Pope to forbid attacks on Luther, and by the desire of his opponents to secure a verbal victory over one who was not yet their equal in controversy. They all acted on the principle which the young men gave to Rheoboam, so Erasmus wrote to Nicholas Everard in 1521, "my little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins."

Even when the need for Luther's protests had been admitted, first by Egidius of Viterbo, and later by Pope Adrian himself, persecution was still the only way of dealing with the audacious monk who had dared to take notice of obvious defects in the papal system; he himself was denounced as a second Mahomet, and his followers, more dangerous than the Turk, were ordered to be suppressed. The infallible authority of the Church was to be maintained even when corruptions had been admitted; and its leaders showed themselves to be "rather . . . exasperated at the discovery of their errors than thankful for the occasion of correcting them."

When in the later stages of the contest Cajētān, one of Luther's bitterest opponents, was appointed President of the Congregation

of inquiry; and when the Bull against him was entrusted to Eck for publication the papacy openly showed its bias.

Leo with his charming smile and easy-going ways never allowed problems really to annoy him; he endeavoured to solve them by minimising them. It was perhaps hard for a Pope of his time to realize the possibility of a serious attempt at reformation, so often had the cry gone up that such a movement was at hand. For it should be remembered that when the popes adopted the use of political weapons, their opponents retaliated with such spiritual weapons as were available for them; the threat of a reformation was one of the most obvious.

The next occupant of the chair of St. Peter was Adrian VI. A contemporary applied to him Cicero's remark about Cato: "He behaves as if he had to do with Plato's Republic instead of the scum of the earth that Romulus collected,"[1] and a recent historian has described him as "a dull man with chronic good intentions."[2] His election to the papacy was most unexpected as he was not even a member of the sacred college, and he regarded it as a proof of the purity and piety of the Cardinals. Soon after his election he wrote to Erasmus asking for his help and counsel, but nothing came of this or of other attempts to find a remedy for the Church's ills, and when he died the schism was almost beyond the power of man's healing.

(2) The mistakes in dealing with the early

[1] Girolamo Negri, quoted in *Camb. Mod. Hist.* ii., p. 20.
[2] Armstrong, op. cit. i., p. 142.

symptoms of revolt in Germany were ultimately due to the policy, first consistently developed by Sixtus IV, of turning the papacy into a strong Italian state. The success of this policy was considerable, but indirectly it involved the neglect of Germany; and the price paid for political power in Italy was eventually the loss of spiritual allegiance throughout the whole of Northern Europe. Though Italy and Germany had for long been parts of the same empire they were widely separated in thought and outlook; for many years there had been growing up in Germany a strong feeling against the rapacity of the Roman ecclesiastics, so great was the volume of this private grievance that it had come by the time of Luther to be regarded as a national wrong; thus through papal neglect and extortion, there had become established in the hearts of the German people "a bank of discontent," to use Burke's phrase, "every hour accumulating," and upon this bank the reformers were able to draw at their pleasure. The Reformation was the "effect, not the cause, of a breach which had slowly grown between Latin and Teuton." [1]

The importance of a good party-cry is a commonplace of electioneering; but it is sometimes forgotten that even great movements are held up for want of some suitable phrase, or, better still, some suitable person in whom they may find a symbol. The German national spirit which was then nearing its flood-tide,[2]

[1] *Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton* ii., p. 185.

[2] Armstrong, op. cit. i., pp. 46 ff. Luther was indeed well fitted for the office, witness his cry, "What have we Germans to do with St. Peter?"

found such a person in Luther, and he became the symbol of revolt against alien interference.

The Emperors though outwardly orthodox were not altogether sorry to have under their control a possible instrument by means of which they might be able to bring pressure to bear upon the Pope. Maximilian, when recommending Luther to the protection of the Elector of Saxony, remarked that there might come a time when he would be useful; and even so pious a servant of the Church as Charles V, disgusted by the treachery of successive popes, was not above adopting the same policy.

The Reformation owed much to the political support of the German princes; but the value of this support must not be exaggerated, nor must it be imagined that Germany acted as a single whole. Napoleon used to say that had Charles V declared for Luther he would have united Germany and then conquered Europe. This opinion shows a lack of historical insight, for had Charles become a Protestant it is certain that many of the princes—whose support of the Reformation was often inspired by dynastic jealousies—would have gone back to the old religion and so preserved the balance of power. The divisions of Germany went too deep for any real unity.

(3) Thus the opposition of Rome on the one hand and the support and encouragement of his countrymen on the other combined to urge Luther along his appointed path. But there was another important factor which must not be forgotten—the personality of the reformer himself. First and foremost Luther was

a man with a genius for religion and for interpreting the religious ideas of his own contemporaries in Germany; unfortunately, like many practical men, he did not recognize the limits of his own knowledge, and by refusing to admit the validity of ideas which were beyond his comprehension he in effect exalted his own subjective experiences into a universal law.

But though Luther was a religious genius he was no theologian (as Erasmus pointedly reminded him more than once), and his knowledge of Greek, never very considerable, was mostly acquired in later life from his colleague and disciple Melanchthon. Dean Stanley once remarked, "How different the fortunes of the Church of England might have been if Newman had been able to read German." [1] Did time allow, it would be interesting to speculate upon the difference which might have been made to the fortunes of the Catholic Church, had Luther's knowledge of Greek been sufficient to enable him to modify the rigid doctrines of St. Augustine, with something of the "sweetness and light" of Origen and his fellow Alexandrines.

The importance of the work which Luther accomplished, however, is beyond dispute; nor can we deny his resoluteness in the face of danger and opposition; but our estimate of his character would be considerably higher had he been able to preserve amidst the stress of public life some of those gentler virtues which make his family and private life so admirable. Controversy seemed to bring out all that was

[1] Mark Pattison, *Memoirs*, p. 210.

worst in the reformer; he became coarse and violent, and as is so often the case with the violent, inconsistent and lacking in principle.

(*a*) Luther's strength and weakness alike lay in his belief that God's grace is everything, man's will nothing.[1] His own subordination to the Almighty was so complete that he came to regard himself as an almost passive instrument in the divine hand, and like an Old Testament prophet he could rejoice in the slaughter of thousands of luckless peasants and even claim that his own terrible exhortations to further massacre were uttered at the command of God himself. The belief in his own inspiration led him to brook correction from no man, and since he announced that he had his dogmas of a certainty direct from Heaven, to differ from him was to deny the faith. Such an attitude of mind is the sure herald of deterioration in character; and we find Luther adopting a tone of arrogance and lofty superiority even to Erasmus; whilst his reply to Henry VIII with its "Come, Master Henry, and I will teach you" was an exhibition of cheap insolence worthy of the pages of some Communist "rag" of our own day.

(*b*) The gradual progress of Luther's mind can be marked by the different authority which from time to time he was prepared to recognize. Until the Leipzig dispute of 1519 he held to the Pope; after that to a general council; at the Diet of Worms, 1521, this authority was

[1] Milman has pointed out that religious fatalism has constantly been "the creed or rather the moving principle of those who have risen up against established ecclesiastical authority." (Op. cit. iv., p. 329.)

abandoned and the Scriptures alone held worthy of obedience. But even the Scriptures had to be censored and part rejected as inconsistent with his own chosen doctrines; so that it is the inner consciousness of Luther himself which remains as the final court of appeal.[1] In his later days, however, his position was practically that which was afterwards called Erastian; and the subservience of Luther and his clergy made them regard every prince as a Bishop of the Church whose commands were as the ordinances of God. Mr. Armstrong goes so far as to state that "Luther and his associates lost all reverence for authority except that of the lord from whom they drew their stipends."[2] But Luther had to travel a long way before he reached this last stage of degradation, and on the way from time to time he exhibited true nobility of character; his fatal habit of allowing expediency to control principle is the obvious explanation of his decline.

The great crisis of Luther's life was not, as is sometimes supposed, the publication of the XCV theses, but the burning of the papal Bull. The former action merely challenged his equals to an academic discussion; the latter was an act of open defiance, the scornful rejection of the imperious demands of an imperial Church.

As the Bull was cast into the flames many of the spectators no doubt trembled at the temerity of the daring monk; but once the act was completed they must have laughed at their

[1] See further *The Reformers and the Bible*, ch. ii., by the present writer.

[2] Op. cit. ii., p. 138.

fears; the mandate, for all its pompous claims and threats, seemed but

> "a thunder-peal that died
> In ages past."[1]

To Luther himself it was the parting of the ways; henceforth—to vary the metaphor slightly—the harbour was left behind with all its quiet and peace; and the daring voyager as he reached the open sea at last began to feel the heavy waters breaking against his shrinking timbers.

(*c*) After the breach with the papacy Luther's ideas were still further developed by the need for making concessions to more advanced types of Protestantism. As was seen above, the material support received by the Protestants was based in many cases, not upon religious conviction, but upon political expediency; it was necessary therefore that they should consolidate their position as much as possible and ignore minor differences of belief and practice. On one important doctrine no advance towards an understanding proved possible for some time; Luther's belief in the Real Presence was so firm that all attempts at agreement with the Zwinglians failed absolutely; and for a time there was even a prospect of an alliance between Catholics and Lutherans against those who degraded the Eucharist into a mere commemoration. At the Conference of Marburg in 1529, Luther wrote on the table before him the Divine words of institution "This is My body" and would accept no reasoning which was not based

[1] Shelley, *Queen Mab* iii., 148 f.

on their literal truth ; and in the end when his opponents refused to submit to his interpretation, he would not so much as take them by the hand. Eventually in 1536 when Zwingli was dead and his followers weakened, a verbal compromise was agreed upon, but in reality it satisfied nobody.[1]

III

(1) Zwinglianism was a short-lived but interesting development of the Protestant position. It grew up, not like Lutheranism against a princely background, but upon " municipal lines " ; to this last feature it owed the strength of the appeal which it made to the large cities of South Germany.[2] Zwingli himself had a much more modern outlook than the other great leaders of the period, being less rigid in his doctrine and desiring to extend the reformation to the State as well as to the Church. After his tragic death on the field of Kappel the influence of Zwinglianism declined before the rising power of Calvin, until it became in the words of Dr. Whitney " the name of a school of thought rather than of a religious body." [3]

(2) Alongside the more respectable leaders of the Reformation were men of less stability but greater daring. Minds such as are not wanting in our own day, who must always be in advance of their fellows, who tend to discover truth

[1] Hegel regards Luther's refusal to give way as preserving his whole position. (See *Philosophy of History*, pp. 432 f.)

[2] This same feature in Calvinism was the chief obstacle to its spread in royalist France.

[3] *Camb. Mod. Hist.* ii., p. 340.

rather in what is novel than in that which has stood the test of experience. Such leaders seem to forget that it is possible for an advanced guard to get out of touch with the main body, and that a disaster to the former means retreat oftimes for the latter. Minds of this type find a counterpart in the Pilgrims of Mr. Flecker's poem, *The Golden Journey to Samarkand.*

> " We are the Pilgrims, master ; we shall go
> Always a little further : it may be
> Beyond that last blue mountain barred with snow,
> Across that angry or that glimmering sea.
>
> " White on a throne or guarded in a cave
> There lives a prophet who can understand
> Why men were born : but surely we are brave,
> Who make the golden journey to Samarkand."

Of such pilgrim souls determined to go " Always a little further " the Reformation had no lack, and to tell of Carlstadt, the Prophets of Zwickau, and the early Anabaptists, to name but a few, would occupy a course of lectures in itself.

These extremists brought much discredit to the cause of Protestantism—indirectly they served a good purpose in 1521 by showing the need for Luther's controlling and moderating power—and might have gone far to ruin its prospects had not the shifty policy of the Vatican, and the preoccupation of the Emperor with France and her ally the Turk, given the better elements time to consolidate their party by excluding the more objectionable or bringing them into line. The most dangerous of these objectionable elements and the best known was the sect of the Anabaptists. These were extreme individualists in religion, though extreme com-

munists in politics; their doctrines spread mainly amongst the trading and artisan classes; their ideals and conduct were an anticipation of some of the worst features of Bolshevism. In the end Protestants and Catholics combined to crush them by force of arms.

(3) We saw in the previous lecture that one of the marks of the period was a fresh realization of the value of the individual; [1] the peculiar doctrines of the Protestants—and in particular, the tremendous emphasis laid on justification by faith—made a strong appeal to this new spirit; but it had its dangers, for men were not wanting who deemed themselves, after a slight and oft-times quite inadequate study of the Bible, qualified to judge of the most technical questions of theology. The large number of Protestant sects, from the first days even until now, is a symptom of this tendency.

Luther and Melanchthon had but little sympathy with such claims, and in the second generation Lutheranism became as severely orthodox as the Church itself. This insistence upon orthodoxy arose naturally from the situation in which the reformers found themselves. Threatened by Pope and Emperor, and discredited by the extremists, uncertain of their own position or of the authority upon which it rested, they submitted for the most part to the prince under whose rule they found themselves, and by an alliance with the growing power of the territorial state Protestantism succeeded in saving itself. Luther, again to quote Mr. Armstrong, "had done with the

[1] See pp. 11 f.

priesthood of the individual, and absolute liberty of conscience, the entire freedom of religion from the State, the election of the ministry by the congregation. Obedience to authority was now to him the first and great commandment. Henceforth the territorial prince must be the guardian of doctrine, the chastiser of dissent, the fount of ecclesiastical justice, the steward of church revenues, the patron of church benefices. To ecclesiastics might be left the definition of doctrine and the organisation of discipline, but both must be so distinct that the secular power could know what it was to punish or protect. Hence Luther was forced to formulate his doctrine and his ritual." [1] Fortunately he had amongst his followers one who was fitted by nature and by training for the task, and in Melanchthon Protestantism found a legislator who was no unworthy successor to the best of the Schoolmen.

IV

So rapidly did the new doctrines spread that at times it seemed as if the reformers were moving on to the conquest of the whole of Western Christendom; in the end they failed even to retain their earlier conquests unimpaired. At the close of the counter-Reformation the boundary between the Catholic South and the Protestant North almost coincided with the frontier of the old Roman Empire.[2]

[1] Armstrong, op. cit. i., p. 234. When Christianity became the religion of the Empire, Constantine immediately felt the need of doctrinal uniformity and therefore of definitions.

[2] Hegel has some interesting suggestions on this subject, op. cit., p. 437.

The revival of Catholicism was due in part to the reform in Germany which shamed the better spirits into action ; [1] in part to the Sack of Rome in 1527 ; and in part to the growth of the Spanish power in Italy. With the reasons for the revival of Catholicism, however, we are not here concerned, our attention must be confined to the weaknesses in the Protestant position which gave power to that reaction. Some of them have already been indicated. Luther himself was a fanatic, one who was ever conscious of the austere leading of an Almighty hand, but one who was neither a deep thinker nor a wise statesman. Again many of his followers were influenced by unworthy motives ; princes eager to spoil the rich churches and to extend their own boundaries ; unstable monks and nuns tired of a life for which they were not fitted ; German nationalists glad of the chance of an attack on Rome. The rise to power and influence of extremists, although only temporary, was a blow, as we have seen, from which the Protestants were long in recovering.

These weaknesses were weaknesses which arose from outside circumstances ; more serious and from our point of view more important were those weaknesses which were the consequence of the Protestant position itself. I desire to emphasize them in no carping spirit, but to

[1] "The Catholic Church also was essentially influenced by the Reformation : the reins of discipline were drawn tighter, and the greater occasions of scandal, the most crying abuses were abated." (Hegel, op. cit., p. 436.) Burckhardt goes still further and says that, "The moral salvation of the Papacy was due to its mortal enemies." (Op. cit., p. 125.)

take them as warnings or tests to be applied to proposed religious systems or positions to-day.

(1) In the forefront must be placed a wanton ignoring of the facts of history. I cannot help feeling that Dr. Headlam is right when he states that "Protestantism . . . has always considered history a good servant, but a bad master, and has never formed its opinion on historical lines."[1] It is true that the return to the teaching of the New Testament was an appeal to history; but later developments were deliberately put on one side, and what Creighton wrote of Luther is true of the whole movement, it "light-heartedly contemplated a breach in the historical continuity of the ecclesiastical system," [2] a system which had never been really valued, because it had never been really understood.

(2) For the reformers the main concern was the salvation of individual souls, "they seemed," in Newman's words, "to make the doctrine of justification by faith the cardinal point upon which the gates of life open and shut," [3] and in their eyes the Church was little more than a voluntary association of saved men and women. The new doctrine of a Church which was invisible and known to God alone made it impossible for any outward organization to represent it; and the Catholic doctrine of a visible Church which is the agent of the Christ and filled with His Spirit was denied.[4] We are told that men

[1] *History, Authority and Theology*, pp. 236 f. The same charge can be made against Catholicism also, in its Roman form.
[2] Op. cit. vi., p. 153.
[3] *Parochial and Plain Sermons* ii., p. 261.
[4] See Note B, p. 121.

are right in what they affirm, wrong in what they deny. This statement is true to this extent, that in general affirmations are based upon positive experiences, denials only upon what are supposed to be the corollaries of those experiences. By denying doctrines of which they themselves had had no experience the reformers broke this principle, and as a result their system was incomplete and unsatisfying to many of the highest minds. Dr. Liddon's judgment upon the great Evangelical Revival of more than a hundred years ago applies equally well to the Reformation. "The Evangelical movement," he says, "partly in virtue of its very intensity, was, in respect of its advocacy of religious truth, an imperfect and one-sided movement. It laid stress only on such doctrines of Divine Revelation as appeared to its promoters to be calculated to produce a converting or sanctifying effect upon the souls of men. Its interpretation of the New Testament—little as its leaders ever suspected this—was guided by a traditional assumption as arbitrary and as groundless as any tradition which it ever denounced. The real sources of its 'Gospel' were limited to a few chapters of St. Paul's Epistles . . . understood in a manner which left much else in Holy Scripture out of account; and thus the Old Testament history, and even the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded by the Evangelists, were thrown comparatively into the background. The needs and salvation of the believer, rather than the whole revealed Will of Him in Whom we believe, was the governing consideration.

As a consequence, those entire departments of the Christian revelation which deal with the corporate union of Christians with Christ in His Church and with the Sacraments, which by His appointment are the channels of His grace to the end of time, were not so much forgotten as unrecognized." [1] The charge of thrusting the gospels into the background may seem to some unfair as applied to the Evangelicals; it certainly holds true of Luther who, in the Preface to 1 Peter, deliberately stated that "St. Paul's epistles are more of a gospel than Matthew, Mark, and Luke."

This incomplete presentation of the gospel, together with the preaching up of private judgment, did much to foster, even when it did not originate, some of the worst evils of the times. In Luther's mind religion was concerned with the needs of individual men; he forgot that others might extend his doctrine to a wider sphere and apply them to civil and political life. His fierce indignation with Carlstadt and the Peasants was no merely conventional outburst, calculated to disassociate himself from their excesses; it was a genuine recoil against those who had caricatured his teaching, the helpless rage of the creator against the monster whom he has unwittingly made and whom he can no longer control.

(3) To estimate the morality of a particular country or period is always a matter of difficulty, from the absence of sufficient material for judgment, and of a standard by which to judge. But it is widely admitted that the spread of

[1] *Life of E. B. Pusey* i., pp. 255 f.

Protestantism in its early days was accompanied by a relaxation of moral standards which almost amounted to a collapse. Much of this was no doubt due to the unsettled conditions of the times, and to the removal of the restraints of the old ecclesiastical system—the similar breakdown of morals in Italy, where the Reformation doctrines had but little vogue, was due to this cause—but much of the blame must be laid at the doors of the new teaching. The two doctrines which were especially blameworthy were the excessive emphasis laid on faith, and the denial of human responsibility. "No one," said Luther, "will amend his life; the elect will have theirs amended for them; the non-elect will perish in their misery." He himself whilst admitting the increase of evil—"The longer we preach the Gospel the deeper people plunge into greed, pride, and luxury"[1]—put it down to the malice of the Devil who desired to destroy the Gospel; a somewhat damaging admission. Erasmus tells us that his own experience may have been unfortunate, but that he never met anyone who was not changed for the worse by the new teaching.[2]

In the next generation the influence of Melanchthon, whose outlook was pronouncedly ethical, began to make itself felt; but Lutheranism never developed that moral intensity which was so striking a feature of Calvinism. Someone has said that justification by faith is a "doctrine which fires and fortifies great saints, but is terribly apt to delude common men with

[1] Quoted *Camb. Mod. Hist.* ii., p. 223.
[2] See Note C, p. 122.

a show of religion." [1] Unfortunately amongst the leaders of the Reformation there were no great saints, and the common people could excuse their own failings by the example of those in spiritual authority. The reformers seemed never able to rise clear of the low standards of their times, and like the papacy itself were constantly found willing to sacrifice principle to expediency.

The best known instance of this sacrifice is the notorious case of Philip of Hesse, who was allowed to contract a bigamous marriage on condition that he kept it a secret. The secret was not kept and the matter became public; Luther brazened it out, but the gentler Melanchthon—although he himself had suggested this very course to Henry VIII as a solution of his matrimonial difficulties—was so overcome by shame that he took to his bed and very nearly died. The cause of Protestantism was terribly damaged by this countenancing of evil. Luther no doubt felt that he had as much right as a pope of Rome to permit bigamy; [2] he forgot that the papal system was already well established and used to withstanding such blows, and that his own appeals rested on a moral not on a historical basis.

(4) Another weakness of the Reformation was that it had no real sympathy with learning. Luther, it is true, was exceedingly anxious that education should be fostered in order that all might be able to read their Bibles, but his

[1] Beard, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 132.

[2] As was done in the case of Henry of Castile (see *Camb. Mod. Hist.* ii., p. 241).

denial of the freedom of the will took away the desire for study, since direct inspiration, as with the Theosophists of our own day, was a quicker and less burdensome method of arriving at truth. Melanchthon is an honourable exception to this condemnation; he had a passionate love for learning, especially for Greek learning—witness his volume *Institutiones Grammaticæ Græcæ*—and to his ceaseless labours the high state of German education in recent times is largely due. But to the bulk of the Protestants learning was a worldly thing, even a snare of the evil one, and amidst the aridity of theological bickering culture was almost allowed to die out. As early as 1520 Erasmus began to suspect that the growth of Lutheranism would mean the destruction of letters; and very soon a marked decrease in the numbers of students at the various universities justified his suspicions. Even at Wittenberg, where both Luther and Melanchthon held professorships, the ten years following 1521 saw a drop in numbers from 245 to 174; after a time Melanchthon succeeded in checking it, but as late as 1557 he bewails in very strong language the decline of letters and science.[1]

The more extreme Protestant, like "the narrower Evangelical of a century ago," hated learning like "the beasts which have no understanding."[2] There is a familiar ring about the following declaration of a group of Strasburg reformers: "Perish the graces of the Latin language, perish the marvels of learning, which

[1] *Corpus Reformatorum* xii., pp. 240 ff.
[2] See Note D, p. 122.

obscure the glory of Christ ; the word of Christ saves us, the word of others destroys us." There were some even who seriously proposed the destruction of all literature except the Bible. In order to find a parallel to this state of mind we must go back to the early days of Islam, and the destruction of the great library of Alexandria ; though probably the story of Omar's vandalism is apocryphal.[1]

(5) Gibbon has assured us that "it is the first care of a reformer to prevent any future reformation."[2] It is certainly true that a successful revolution involves almost of necessity the setting up of a new despotism. In the sphere of politics this is a commonplace, it has not been so readily recognized in that of thought. Yet we narrowly escaped such a despotism in the last days of the nineteenth century, when for a time it seemed as if a new orthodoxy were to be imposed, an orthodoxy based on the findings of Natural Science and having as its Aquinas the venerable figure of Mr. Herbert Spencer.[3]

Freedom is of the essence of Protestantism ; but no sooner were the reformers sufficiently

[1] See Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, etc., ch. li. The same may safely be said of the burning of the Palatine library by Gregory the Great. (See John of Salisbury, *De Nugis Curialium* ii., p. 26.)

[2] Op. cit., ch. xliv.

[3] The same comparison has been made by Mr. G. K. Chesterton. "Mr. Herbert Spencer," he says, "is a respectable, almost a dapper figure, his theory is agnostic and his tone polite and precise. And yet he threw himself into a task more insane and gigantic than that of Dante, an inventory or plan of the universe itself ; the awful vision of existence as a single organism, like an amœba on the disc of a microscope. He claimed, by implication, to put in their right places the flaming certainty of the martyrs, the wild novelties of the modern world ; to arrange the eternal rock of Peter and the unbroken trance of Buddhism" (*Watts*, pp. 65 *f.*)

well established than they began to set up a new orthodoxy, the slightest deviation from which was regarded as heresy. The new system of dogma was held as fanatically as the old, from which it differed mainly in refusing to grant a place to tradition and the fathers; its authors assumed "that the Scripture of the Old and New Testament contain a complete, self-consistent and symmetrical system of doctrine, which can be extracted from them by the use of ordinary methods of reasoning."[1] Thus the spirit of devotion and true religion which had marked the outbreak of the movement was forced into a mould of narrow orthodoxy,[2] and inevitably the most noteworthy result was suspended animation. Religion became a skeleton from which the life had departed, and in its long wandering through the logical labyrinth of Protestant dogma the ardour of man's spirit was slowly cooled.

The Reformation coincided, as is well known, with the beginning of the process by which political power was gradually extended from kings and nobles to the trading and middle classes[3]; theologically it was a return to earlier purity of doctrine based mainly upon the teaching of St. Paul. Our own century is witnessing a further extension of political power by the enfranchisement of the proletariat; there are not wanting signs that it may be accompanied by a further reformation of religion by a return

[1] Beard, op. cit., p. 265.

[2] Beard says of Calvin's *Institution*: "Christianity has never before or since been so completely cast into the mould of a system." (Op. cit., p. 295.)

[3] Cf. p. 43 above.

not to the teaching of the great apostle, but to that of his still greater Master, and by the application to every sphere of man's activity of the principles of the Lord Jesus Himself.

LECTURE III

" Der Aberglaube, sowie manches andre Wähnen, verliert sehr leicht an seiner Gewalt, wenn er, statt unserer Eitelkeit zu schmeicheln, ihr in den Weg tritt, und diesem zarten Wesen eine böse Stunde machen will; wir sehen alsdann recht gut, dass wir ihn loswerden können, sobald wir wollen; wir entsagen ihm um so leichter, je mehr alles, was wir ihm ent ziehn, zu unserm Vorteil gereicht."

GOETHE.

" If Reason may not command, it will condemn."

BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE.

ἐναντιώτατον γάρ που σμικρολογία ψυχῇ μελλούσῃ τοῦ ὅλου καὶ παντὸς ἀεὶ εποπέξεσθαι θείου τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνου.

PLATO, *Republic*, p. 486 A.

" God has conceded two sights to a man—
One, of men's whole work, time's completed plan;
The other, of the minute's work, man's first
Step to the plan's completeness: what's dispersed
Save hope of that supreme step which, descried
Earliest, was meant still to remain untried
Only to give you heart to take your own
Step, and there stay, leaving the rest alone?"

R. BROWNING.

LECTURE III

THE WAY OF AMENDMENT

Mark well her bulwarks, set up her houses; that ye may tell them that come after.—PSALM xlviii. 13.

THE Reformation commonly so called was not fully successful; and it failed because on the one hand it neglected the past and its lessons, because on the other it separated itself from the immediate future by setting up a rigid system of dogma. The method of Erasmus, reformation by amendment, still awaits a real trial, and to an examination of its principles and methods the two remaining lectures will be devoted.

I

(1) Such a method of reform was not entirely novel even in the days of Erasmus; for generations men had been hoping and praying for a purification of the Church that should be brought about by peaceful and constitutional means. At one time the holding of a General Council was regarded as a panacea; but national jealousies combined with other causes to produce endless quarrels and "men could not discover the interests of Christendom, because they were overlaid by conflicting interests of classes and nations"; [1] in the end the Conciliar

[1] Creighton, op. cit. i., p. vi.

movement was so discredited that Pius II felt strong enough to condemn any future appeal to a General Council as unlawful.[1] He was able to do this the more readily as the repeated threats to summon a Council, by opponents of the papacy, had robbed the movement of all respect; no one regarded such threats as serious attempts at reform, for all knew only too well that they were merely opportunities of annoying or blackmailing the Pope. When Henry VIII wrote to Maximilian that the Council of Pisa would do more harm than good to the Church, since it was inspired by private animosity, the collapse of the movement was already close at hand.[2] None the less its failure, as Dr. Figgis pointed out, was "as direct a cause of the Reformation as the despotism of Louis XIV was the real origin of the great revolution."[3]

(2) The only hope that was then left to the Church, if schism were to be avoided, lay in the papacy itself. On more than one occasion each of the cardinals assembled for the election of a pope, made the most solemn and binding promise that he would make the reform of the Church his first object should the choice fall upon him; and invariably the first act of the new pontiff was to dispense himself from his obligations. Thus reform from the papal court seemed out of the question; nor was it strange that such should be the case, for those who professed to be the most anxious to undertake

[1] By the Bull *Execrabilis*, January, 1460. See further Note A, p. 124.

[2] See *Lettres de Louis XII* ii., p. 305.

[3] *Churches in the Modern State*, p. 236.

the good work were themselves the very people who most needed reforming.

(3) Alongside these official and semi-official attempts at reform there went the work of a whole host of teachers and thinkers, known and unknown, who laboured by speech and by pen to bring in that better time which they felt assured God must have in store for His Church. They held on their way with "eyes grown dim with watching on the pilot stars," reviled often and misunderstood, but not deterred or discouraged. In many a lonely cell and parsonage, prayer was ever being offered up by nameless saints, who were content to bear "the tongueless vigil and all the pain," if only the Bride of Christ might once more be without spot or blemish in the days to come.

Those whose names have been preserved make up a very varied list, differing as they do from one another more perhaps than they agree, but all united in their fervent desire for reform. Thomas à Kempis and Savonarola on the one side, Wycliffe and Hus on the other; mystics like Eckhardt and Tauler; educationalists like Gerhard Groot and Colet; theologians such as Gerson and John Wessel, are but examples of this infinite variety in unity. Some, indeed, who prepared the way for reform by the exposure of abuses wrote with no definitely religious object in view, Boccaccio was almost as serviceable as Erasmus in revealing the immoral lives of monks and nuns, and our own Chaucer attacked the abuse of indulgences long before Luther was even born.

II

Erasmus wished to retain from the past all that ministered to edifying; but he was bitterly opposed to its abuses and superstitions. He tried to hold the middle course between the extreme Papist and the extreme Protestant; with the one he accepted the belief in a Catholic Church and even the less extravagant of the papal claims; with the other he appealed to the authority of Holy Scripture.

In regard to doctrine as a whole he desired more freedom than was usual amongst Catholics of his day, realizing that suspense of judgment is often the only safe attitude in face of the many obscurities of existence; he dreaded the cramping effect of multiplying articles of faith, and the consequent limitation of the number of subjects upon which it was still permissible to have mere opinions; hence the refinements and subtle distinctions of the Schoolmen were an abomination to him. In the preface to the *Enchiridion*, written at Basle in July, 1518, he pleads for simplicity in dealing with the statement of the faith, and a single sentence gives the key to his position: Quae pertinent ad fidem, quam paucissimis articulis absoluantur. [1]

One of the greatest of the gifts which had been entrusted to Erasmus was an ample supply of common sense and an appreciation of its power to smooth over most of the difficulties

[1] This preface was addressed to Paul Volz, Abbot of Hügshofen (subsequently a follower of Calvin); it was afterwards reprinted by Erasmus amongst his letters, and can be found in Allen, op. cit. iii., pp. 362 ff.: see further Note B, p. 124.

and disagreements which crop up in life—theological or otherwise. To this belief in the power of "sanctified common sense" he added a firm confidence in the final victory of truth and in its ability to prevail over error if given the opportunity of circulating. But a programme of reform which is based on the application of common sense and the spread of truth can only be realized gradually if its results are to prove permanent. To a generation which was excited and enraged by the continuation of long-standing abuses, a policy of this kind lacked the attractiveness of more violent measures; but in spite of all criticism and discontent Erasmus held steadily to his conviction that "a calm and reasonable progress in which scholar and statesman should go hand in hand was the only way by which victory could be secured and a real and enduring reformation be accomplished." [1]

Erasmus has often been accused of inconsistency; but I do not think the accusation is one which can be fairly maintained. It is the invariable fate of moderate men thus to be attacked, as the recent history of the Labour party in Great Britain clearly shows. Ideas which at one time were regarded as extreme are accepted, and become mere commonplaces; the more advanced reformers thereupon condemn those who limit their demands and refuse to go further, not realizing that their moderation is the result not of cowardice or wavering, but of a reasoned and consistent policy.

[1] *Camb. Mod. Hist.* i., p. 461.

III

For the propagation of his ideas Erasmus depended almost entirely upon his pen; he was never a preacher [1] or public speaker, and though at times he held teaching offices, both in this and other Universities, his lectures were mainly linguistic and their immediate effect was limited to the small circle of their hearers.

His literary activity found an outlet in two directions. He was a man of letters in the primary and in the conventional sense. [1]In the first place he carried on an immense correspondence with all kinds of people, from Emperors and Popes down to simple monks and subordinate officials. Many of his letters, which according to the custom of the time were intended for the eyes of the general public as well as for the person addressed, were collected and printed during his own lifetime. [2]His books, various alike in quality and subject-matter, had a tremendous circulation; they came forth in a constant stream; satires, commentaries, editions of the classics or of the fathers, devotional and polemical treatises, it mattered not what, people bought them, and Erasmus probably held the public ear in a way which has never been exceeded even by writers of the present age. As an instance of

[1] This statement is not of course to be taken literally: we hear, for example, mention of a course of sermons which he preached in Paris in 1495, *de laudibus diuorum*.

[2] One of his last acts was to prepare an edition of his correspondence to guard against the inclusion of many forgeries which were circulated in his name.

this popularity it may suffice to mention that a bookseller in Paris when he heard that the *Familiar Colloquies* was about to be condemned by the University immediately had 24,000 copies printed as a single edition.

IV

Erasmus' literary campaign was both negative and positive in its objects. Taking the negative or destructive side first he attacked abuses of administration; he exposed the evil lives of clergy and monks; he ridiculed popular superstitions; he joined in the criticism of the Schoolmen and their system.

(1) The abuses of administration which Erasmus attacked have already been described in a previous lecture;[1] his writings are full of shrewd hits and, since they differ but little from one another, a specimen taken from *The Praise of Folly* will give a good idea of his methods.

"As to the Popes of Rome," he says, "who pretend themselves Christ's Vicars, if they would but imitate His exemplary life . . .; if they did but consider the import of the word Pope, which signifies a Father; or if they did but practise their surname of Most Holy; what order or degree of men would be in a worse condition? There would be then no such vigorous makers of parties, and buying of votes . . . upon a vacancy . . .: and those, who by bribery or other indirect courses, should get themselves elected, would never secure their

[1] See above, pp. 13 ff.

sitting firm in the chair, by guns, poison, force, and violence. How much of their pleasure would be abated, if they were endued with one scrap of wisdom?. . . with one grain of that salt, which Christ commanded them not to lose the savour of. All their riches, all their honour, their jurisdictions, their Peter's patrimony, their offices, their dispensations, their licences, their indulgences, their long train, and attendants (see in how short a compass I have abbreviated all their marketings of religion), in a word, all their perquisites would be forfeited and lost; and in their room would succeed watchings, fastings, tears, prayers, sermons, hard studies, repenting sighs, and a thousand such-like severe penalties; nay, what is yet more deplorable, it would then follow, that all their clerks, amanuenses, notaries, advocates, proctors, secretaries, the office of grooms, ostlers, serving men, etc., in short, all these troops of attendants, which depend on His Holiness, would lose their several employments. This indeed would be hard, but what yet remains would be more dreadful still; the very Head of the Church, the spiritual prince, would then be brought from all his splendour, to the poor equipage of a scrip and staff." [1]

(2) The exposure of the evil lives of monks and clergy in an age when even a Pope confessed that it was safer to offend a great prince than a humble Dominican was attended by not a little risk and provoked a vigorous and pitiless counter-attack. His own unfortunate experiences

[1] See Note C, p. 125.

of the monastic life—as a young man he had been forced into a monastery against his will by his guardians—gave Erasmus an insight into the methods and practices of the "man-stealers" as he delighted to call them, but at the same time his obvious prejudice and dislike take away not a little from the value of his evidence. No doubt many of the monks had been inspired by unworthy motives in taking up their residence within the convent walls, but it was surely an exaggeration to say as Erasmus did, that "most of them have had no other call than stupidity, ignorance, despair, laziness, and the hope of being fed." He contrasted the monasteries unfavourably with the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, both for piety and regularity of manners, and blamed the religious Orders for the greater part of the mischief with which the Christian religion was beset.[1]

Well might Pope, after condemning the Middle Ages, a little unjustly perhaps, at a time when

> "Much was believed, but little understood,
> And to be dull was construed to be good;"

go on to describe how

> "A second deluge learning thus o'errun
> And the monks finished what the Goths begun.
> At length Erasmus, that great injured name
> (The glory of the priesthood, and the shame!)
> Stemmed the wild torrent of a barbarous age,
> And drove those holy Vandals off the stage."[2]

[1] Letter to Servatius Rogerus, Prior of the monastery of Stein (Allen, *Eras. Epist.* i., pp. 565 ff.).

[2] *Essay on Criticism*, 689 ff.

(3) Of Erasmus' method of dealing with the superstitions of the times we have had already an example in the extract which I read in a former lecture [1] from one of the *Familiar Colloquies*. It ought perhaps to be explained that the collection of short pieces published under this title was written in the first place as a guide to the cultivation of a good Latin style. The method was very simple. A number of dialogues illustrating various aspects of contemporary life and thought were put before the reader as an example of the use of appropriate language, all he had to do was to model his style upon them. The fame of Erasmus as a scholar ensured a very large demand for the book; and the thousands of ambitious young students who gave their nights and days to imitating its style soon became very familiar with the abuses and corruptions which its contents so mercilessly exposed. In later days the authorities realized its dangerous tendencies and placed it on the index, but by that time its work was done.

Erasmus with his practical mind and keen insight had but little patience with those who made long pilgrimages to tread the sacred fields of Palestine when all the time their hearts were full of Egypt and Babylon; [2] or with those who thought the possession of a piece of the true cross [3] of more value than a knowledge of the power of the atoning work of Christ Himself. In the numerous vows which men were in the habit of making to this saint or

[1] See above, p. 18.
[2] See Note D, p. 126.
[3] See Note E, p. 127.

that, he saw merely a pagan survival of the custom of sacrificing a cock to Æsculapius or a bull to Neptune ; " the names are changed," he said, " the intention is the same." [1]

If the adventure described in the Colloquy entitled *The Religious Pilgrimage* is based, as seems probable, on the experience of the author himself, Erasmus' visit to the shrine of our Lady of Walsingham must have scandalized the official guardians. On being shown a joint of St. Peter's finger "large enough to be taken for that of a giant," he remarked that the apostle " must needs have been a right lusty fellow " ; hereupon there was a burst of unseemly mirth from a bystander and the dignity of the guide had to be soothed by a substantial tip. Erasmus, however, had sufficient respect for the shrine to leave behind him a copy of Greek verse in honour of our Lady ; or perhaps he thought it a good opportunity of showing off his skill in such exercises ; if so, he must have been disappointed, for on a subsequent visit he found that disputes had arisen as to whether the characters were Hebrew or Arabic ; one authority had even gone so far as to pronounce the opinion that they were entirely fictitious, an illuminating example of monkish ignorance.

Sometimes his visit to a shrine called forth a sterner comment, as when he saw the tomb of Thomas à Becket covered with an immense number of jewels of fabulous worth. He thought that " the saint would have been better pleased with a tomb adorned with leaves and

[1] *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*, Rule IV.

flowers," and suggested that it would be much better that such superfluities should be applied to charitable objects than be reserved for princely spoilers, a prophetic vision of their ultimate fate.[1]

But in spite of his fierce indignation against the many superstitions of the times Erasmus, like Leo X and the great majority of his contemporaries, still retained a childlike belief in astrology; it needed the caustic irony of a Rabelais to burn out so deeply rooted a superstition.

(4) In the idle word-splitting which passed for theology in his day Erasmus could see but little that was good. Scholasticism had set out with the worthy and admirable ideal of comprehending all knowledge and all truth within the limits of a single system; but in carrying out their ideal and applying the system to details the Schoolmen had brought ridicule upon both it and themselves. When men of learning and gifts could seriously devote, or even have been represented as devoting themselves to the discussion of such questions as to "whether God could have taken upon Him the form . . . of a cucumber . . . and supposing He had taken the form of a cucumber, how He could have preached, performed miracles, or been crucified,"[2] it is not strange that they began to be despised in an age of real truth-

[1] *The Religious Treat.* When Æneas Silvius visited England in 1435 he states that he was glad to have seen many things, "and (that which obscures the fame of all else) the golden shrine of S. Thomas of Canterbury, covered with diamonds, pearls and carbuncles, where they consider it a crime to offer any baser metal than silver." (*Commentarii* i., p. 4—quoted by C. M. Ady, *Pius II*, p. 42).

[2] *The Praise of Folly.* See Note F, p. 127.

seeking; nor were elaborate answers to the inquiry as to what Peter would have consecrated had he celebrated the Eucharist when His Lord yet hung upon the cross, nor even an exact explanation of the mystery of transubstantiation "on a blackboard" [1] calculated to restore confidence in their wisdom.

We must not be surprised that one who regarded an undue curiosity concerning the deeper mysteries of the faith as both "dangerous and impertinent" should take up arms against those who encouraged such studies, which in addition to fettering the mind exhausted it "with a kind of crude and barren subtlety . . . and were to be condemned as having no sap in them nor any breath of life." [2] The mistress whom he had chosen to serve was in his eyes "the queen of the sciences," the so-called theologians had stripped her of her beauty and majesty and reduced her almost to the state of a dumb and ragged beggar.

V

Erasmus developed his attack along these various lines, conducting it with vigour and energy and a plentiful use of irony and ridicule; the words originally applied to W. S. Gilbert might well have been spoken of him

> "His foe was folly
> His weapon wit."

In so doing he merely followed the example of contemporary writers whom he excelled, not

[1] *Corpus Reformatorum* iv., p. 718.
[2] Letter to Colet (Allen, op. cit. i., pp. 246 ff.).

only in skill, but also in moderation. His satire has the qualities of Dryden rather than those of Pope—to name two great masters of this kind of writing in our own literature—and taken as a whole is healthy and masculine in tone, seldom descending to what is petty or spiteful, and above all avoiding anything in the nature of a snarl. What aroused such bitter opposition to Erasmus was not the malice or cruelty of his writings, but the ability with which he exposed evils which were too sensitive to bear the light and the sun, his opponents recognized that "life and death" lay in his "doomful writings." [1]

The counter-attacks of the monks and Schoolmen consisted mostly in pure abuse, some of it exceedingly feeble stuff, though all of it exceedingly vicious. One monk is reported to have obtained a protrait of Erasmus in order to have the pleasure of spitting upon it daily; others stated that he was so steeped in the beer and butter of his native land as to be incapable of clear thinking. Some with a more subtle sense of humour persisted in spelling his name "Errasmus," a pinprick which perhaps he deserved since he himself called Standish Bishop of St. Asaph, Bishop of St. Ass.[2] All this seems to us quite unworthy of learned and religious men, but as Dean Church said

[1] It is not without interest to notice that Erasmus' bitterest and most venomous writings were reserved for the Lutherans.

[2] Dietrich of Niem was in the habit of referring to Gregory XII as "Errorious" instead of Gregorius. In regard to the Bishop of St. Asaph I see that Mr. Allen states that he appears in a register of shipping payments as Bishop of St. Asse, so that Erasmus may not have been quite so blameworthy as might appear. (Op. cit. iv., p. 387.)

of some of his contemporaries, and as more recent experience has shown us, theologians when they get into a panic talk "like old ladies rather than philosophers." [1]

And in truth many of Erasmus' opponents were in a most deadly panic. An illustration of this can be found in the account of an interview which took place before the Rector of the University of Louvain between him and a very bitter antagonist named Egmund. After listening to much abuse and denunciation, Erasmus endeavoured to get to the real points in dispute, and remarking that abuse was unworthy of them both he said, "Let us proceed to arguments. Imagine that I——"

"I don't imagine," roared the monk, interrupting. "I won't imagine; that is your business; you poets imagine, and never tell anything but lies."

"If you won't imagine," replied Erasmus, now more inclined to laugh than to be angry, "then grant."

"I won't grant," cried Egmund.

"Suppose that it is so."

"I won't suppose."

"Well, then, put the case."

"I won't put."

"Well," said Erasmus, "let it be——"

"But it isn't," shrieked Egmund. [2]

And so the attempted argument goes on, very amusing to read—but very wearisome both to mind and body for him who spent his day and nights in controversy with such opponents.

[1] *Life and Letters* (Eversley edition), p. 184.
[2] Letter to Sir Thomas More (Allen, op. cit. iv., pp. 384 f.).

For it must be remembered that the whole of Erasmus' later life was one constant struggle against unscrupulous and venomous antagonists, and moreover that his mediating position laid him open to the assaults of either side. To the extreme Catholics he was a traitor and a heretic; to the Reformers a false prophet, a very Balaam speaking words of truth but taking the hire of unrighteousness. He tells us that his only consolation and support against this prolonged outburst of malice and cruelty was in the realization of God's love and protection.

VI

The task of denunciating and condemnation, although necessary, is not to most minds attractive, and doubtless even so skilled a disputant as Erasmus regarded his hours of constructive study and writing as far more agreeable than those of mere controversy. Let us now turn to his positive contribution to the Church's welfare.

Erasmus' whole method was based on a single main principle, and that a principle which must be ever in the mind of the historian: go back to your original authorities. He demanded that theology and religion alike should be founded, not merely upon what had been said by the Schoolmen or even by the fathers, but on what was contained in the Scriptures themselves so far as their exact meaning could be discovered. And herein he further postulated a return to the Scriptures in their original language, to the

Hebrew and the Greek of the Old and New Testaments respectively, instead of to the Latin of the Vulgate, a version which was unreliable in itself and objectionable because connected in men's minds with obsolete and traditional interpretations.[1]

Mr. Beard has summed up the work which he did in the following weighty judgment. "To overestimate the worth of what Erasmus did for scientific theology is simply impossible. . . . His New Testament text lies at the base of all subsequent textual criticism, his editions of the Fathers first made possible the study of Christian antiquity. He compassed what was almost the whole of human knowledge, and brought it to bear upon religious truth."[2]

(1) The most important of all the works of Erasmus and the one which aroused the fiercest opposition was undoubtedly his edition of the New Testament text. Erasmus' antagonist at Louvain, the monk Egmund to whom reference was made above, was little more than an ignorant fanatic; but when he said that the New Testament which Erasmus had "written" would bring the whole scholastic and monastic system to an end he was voicing the thoughts of many, and was perhaps not far from the truth.

The New Testament was published by Froben of Basle on the 1st of March, 1516, the very year in which More's *Utopia* first saw the light; it included not only a revised Greek text but also a new Latin version and notes and comments on the matter. It must not, however,

[1] Cf. examples in *The Reformers and the Bible*, p. 7.
[2] Op. cit., pp. 65 and 70.

be imagined that the pioneer work of Erasmus reached what would now be regarded as a high standard, far from it; but like Reuchlin's *Hebrew Grammar*, which had been published shortly before, it was a promise of better things, the first attempt to apply a new critical method. The earliest draft of this New Testament text was made in England probably in 1512-13, and for this draft he had only four very inferior MSS. to rely upon, and even for the final text he was not in a much better position.[1] But not only was the text based on inferior MSS., it had the further disadvantage of being very hurriedly printed, and so badly were the proofs corrected that Scrivener regarded it as the most faulty book that he had ever come across; nor was the editor himself quite blameless, and in later editions he made many corrections in both text and matter. Pride, however, allowed one or two rather obvious errors to remain. No errors, however, can take away from the greatness of the achievement, for as Erasmus said of the work of another, "He does no injury to his reputation who gives a service proportioned to his day and opens the way to others to do more finished work."[2] When our great Cambridge scholars of a later date, Westcott and Hort, gave to the world their edition of the Greek Testament, they prefixed to it a quotation from the Introduction of Erasmus;

[1] Some particulars of the MSS. used will be found in Allen, *Eras. Epist.* ii., pp. 164 ff., and in the various Prolegomena to the text of N.T. C. R. Gregory thinks that Erasmus did not make use of the best MS. at his disposal. (*Prolegomena to Tischendorf's N.T.* i., pp. 207 ff.)

[2] *Catalogus lucubrationum* i. He is actually referring to his pupil Beatus Rhenanus' edition of *Tertullian*, but also defending himself.

and in so doing they not only enriched their own work but also paid a graceful tribute to one who in far-distant days had opened up the road by which they themselves had travelled.

One of the great hopes which had stimulated Erasmus in undertaking his gigantic task had been the wish that all men, so far as they were able to read, should have the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the New Testament for themselves. As early as 1500 he counselled the young Christian warrior to devote himself to the study of the Scriptures as a weapon against temptation in all its forms and as a balm for every misfortune, and in a much-quoted passage from the Introduction to his New Testament itself he says: "I long for the husbandman to sing parts of them to himself as he follows his plough, for the weaver to hum them to the accompaniment of his shuttle, for the traveller to beguile the tedium of journeying with them."

(2) Next in authority and usefulness to the Scriptures Erasmus placed the great Fathers of the undivided Church, and especially his own favourite, St. Jerome. In this field of labour a great scholar of our own day considers that Erasmus "was far more at home and far more successful" than in his biblical work.[1] And indeed if he had done nothing but patristics the mere recital of the works edited by Erasmus might well convict almost any modern scholar of shameful lack of industry by comparison; but when we remember his textual and biblical works, his controversial writings, his editions

[1] M. R. James, *Camb. Mod. Hist.* i., p. 606.

of the classics, his voluminous correspondence; and on the other hand his difficulties from lack of such helps as lexicons, grammars, and above all the guidance of previous writers,[1] shame for ourselves is lost in admiration for the tremendous achievements of one who from first to last was handicapped by weak bodily health.

Included amongst books published in his lifetime are editions of the complete works of Jerome, Cyprian, Augustine, Hilary, Irenæus, and Ambrose, and in addition he edited parts of Chrysostom, Athanasius, Basil, Origen, and other patristic writers. This was as he himself declared in his Preface to Jerome, a better way of worshipping the saints than "kissing their old shoes and dirty handkerchiefs." In spite of his high regard for the Fathers of the Early Church, Erasmus did not entirely despise their later successors, and with admirable toleration he would even admit the value of the Schoolmen. "I do not hold that even the works of Thomas or Scotus should be entirely set aside," he says; "they wrote for their age, and delivered to us much that they drew from the writings of the ancients most acutely." [2]

(3) Erasmus, like his friend Colet, early realized the importance of education and especially of the religious education of the young. "Christians," he says, "should make it their chief care to inspire their children with sentiments worthy of Christ from their infancy,

[1] On the other hand a modern author has to spend a disproportionate amount of his time in examining work previously done on his subject.

[2] From the Preface to Hilary, quoted in *Camb. Mod. Hist.* i., p. 607.

and amid the caresses of their parents ; nothing makes so strong an impression as the characters stamped on tender minds." [1] Perhaps Erasmus derived his solicitude for the education of the young from the example of earlier teachers in Germany ; for the " strictly German school of humanists . . . held to the old notions of reform, and sought to realize them by working for the spread of education as a means of establishing a higher standard of duty." [2] In his own youthful days he had come across the results of such efforts in the work of the Brethren of the Common Life or Common Lot, to adopt Dr. Whitney's revived form of the original.[3]

But in spite of such shining examples of devotion to the welfare, intellectual and religious, of the young, there was in general a sad lack of suitable schools for their training, but even more serious of those qualified and willing to undertake it. When Colet was engaged in the establishment of his great school of St. Paul's he had much difficulty in finding teachers. The help of Erasmus, who was then in Cambridge, had been enlisted, but his report was not encouraging, for the ingenious question of a certain Master of Arts : " Who would spend his life teaching boys, if he could earn a living in any other way ? " seemed to express the prevailing opinion.[4]

[1] *Enchiridion*, Rule VI. [2] Creighton, op. cit. vi., p. 16.

[3] See his note in *Engl. Hist. Rev.* xxxv. (1920), p. 2. Dr. Whitney claims that Common Lot is the older rendering and the more accurate one, for as A. W. Haddan pointed out (*Remains*, p. 412), a common fund and not a common life was the characteristic of the brethren.

[4] See letter to Colet (Allen, op. cit. i., p. 479) : " Quis sustineat in ea schola vitam agere inter pueros, qui posset vbiuis quomodocunque viuere ? "

The needs of the young, however, did not exhaust Erasmus' interest in education. His daily intercourse with their elders taught him that much of the disputing and quarelling that went on in the world was due to the neglect of learning. The clergy themselves were shamefully wanting in any real qualification for their office of being the teachers of the flock; very few had even an Arts degree, fewer still a theological one.

(4) By his many and various labours Erasmus was helping to build a bridge, slowly indeed and painfully, between the old world which was passing away, and the new which had just come to birth. He stood between them, to use the words of a recent writer, "as a kind of gentleman-usher, selecting with unerring instinct such writers as were worthy of immortality, redeeming them from the obscurity to which a non-reading world had consigned them, and introducing them, as free from soil as he could make them, to the world which dates from the invention of printing." [1] This comment in its original context was intended to apply primarily to the work of Erasmus in editing the classics; he had, however, a not dissimilar function to perform in reconciling, as far as might be, the differences between the faith of the Church and the New Learning; and in making letters, which had become almost entirely pagan "unite in chanting the name of Christ." There was, as we saw in a previous lecture,[2] no deliberate antagonism between the humanists and the

[1] Marcus Dodds, *Erasmus, etc.*, pp. 20 ff.
[2] See above, pp. 5 ff.

guardians of orthodoxy, nor must we regard them as advocates of a rival system to that of the Schoolmen; the New Learning was not a system at all but an attitude of mind, and because it was an attitude of mind it took different forms in different countries. In Italy the Renaissance hardly concerned itself with religion, for the Italian was like "the acolyte who has been all his life too close to the mysteries of the altar to have any reverence left"; [1] but when the movement crossed the Alps, though it may have lost some of the languid sweetness which marked it in the land of its origin, yet the passage over the mountain snows seemed to give it a new vigour and purity. The men of the earlier Renaissance had seen in culture an end in itself; the Teutons with deeper insight extended its scope, and thereby its usefulness, and applied it to the great mysteries of man's being and to the conduct of his life; they recognized that the spiritual side of man's complex nature is as worthy of cultivation as the mental.[2]

From the complicated circumstances of the times it is impossible to ascertain with any accuracy the extent to which Erasmus was a natural product of the German Renaissance, the extent to which he stamped it with his own ideals; but we shall not greatly err if we regard

[1] Beard, op. cit., p. 42.

[2] Cf., however, Dr. Whitney, *Eng. Hist. Rev.* xxxv., p. 3: "In the Netherlands and not in Italy is to be sought the true birthplace of the German Renaissance, which was not artistic, was certainly not pagan, but was from first to last practical and educational in its aims, keeping throughout in close touch with theology. If on the side of mysticism it brought forth Thomas à Kempis, on the side of learning it brought forth Rudolph Agricola."

his writings as typical of the later Northern Renaissance, and as exhibiting those fundamental differences which distinguished it from the earlier movement in Italy.

I have tried to set before you some of the methods by which Erasmus endeavoured to purify and enlighten his contemporaries. The success which rewarded his efforts during his own lifetime was never very considerable, and his career was on the whole a shadowed one though at times lighted up with gleams of summer radiance. At length after long and weary wanderings, after long and weary controversies, it came to an end, and then amidst surroundings which were pitifully alien to his soul. Erasmus died in a Protestant town from which even in the hour of his weakness he was endeavouring to escape " because of our differences about doctrines " ; and longing, strangely enough for one who had lived so cosmopolitan a life, to lay his bones in their native earth ; " I would Brabant were nearer," he writes pathetically in his last epistle. But Basle had been a kindly stepmother to him, and it was perhaps more fitting that his remains should have been borne to their last resting-place in her great cathedral by a band of students, than have been surrounded by the ecclesiastical splendours of his own communion, the pompous ceremonial of a Roman funeral.

LECTURE IV

ἐγὼ γάρ αὖ οὐ δύναμαι ἄλλο τι νομίσαι ἄνω ποιοῦν ψυχὴν βλέπειν μάθημα ἢ ἐκεῖνο, ὃ ἂν περὶ τὸ ὄν τε ᾖ καὶ τὸ ἀόρατον.

PLATO, *Republic*, p. 529 B.

"Ah! let the sweet birds of the Lord
With earth's waters make accord;
Teach how the crucifix may be
Carven from the laurel tree,
Fruit of the Hesperides
Burnish take on Eden-trees,
The Muses' sacred grove be wet
With the red dew of Olivet,
And Sappho lay her burning brows
In white Cecilia's lap of snows!"

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

"Etenim omnes artes, quae ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinclum et quasi cognatione quadam inter se continentur."

CICERO, *Pro Archia Poeta*, § 2.

ἄνδρα δ' ὠφελεῖν ἀφ' ὧν
ἔχοι τε καὶ δύναιτο, κάλλιστος πόνων.

SOPHOCLES, *Œdipus Rex*, 315 f.

"deathless minds which leave when they have past
A path of light."

SHELLEY.

LECTURE IV

THE LESSON FROM ERASMUS

The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.—ROMANS xiii. 12.

ERASMUS died before his long and arduous labours had received any adequate recognition; but from the day of his death the influence of those labours can, in every generation, be discerned by the careful observer. He must not be included amongst those writers who demand that their admirers should ever be seeking on their behalf an "antidote against the opium of time," a refuge from man's forgetfulness.

With the effect of his teaching and life upon the world of culture we are here only indirectly concerned, but it may be well to remind ourselves of the judgment of a great Cambridge teacher who considered that "of all scholars who have popularized scholarly literature Erasmus was the most brilliant, the man whose aims were loftiest, and who produced lasting effects over the widest area." [1]

I

In the sphere of religion Erasmus had an influence which was equally widespread—both

[1] R. C. Jebb in *Camb. Mod. Hist.* i., p. 571.

Catholics and Protestants owed much to his teaching—and it still works amongst us leavening the minds of some of our greatest teachers.

(1) Turning first to the influence exercised by Erasmus over the Protestants we find that Zwingli made a habit of reading some portions of his writings every day, and that he even went to the trouble and expense of a journey to Basle in order to see him. Melanchthon, when he could shake himself free from the overpowering personality of Luther, had a point of view which was not at all unlike that of Erasmus; Dr. Döllinger indeed regarded him as "the most brilliant phenomenon which proceeded from the Erasmian school, equal to his master in many respects, superior to him in others." [1] In the later editions of his great work *Loci Communes*—a work intended to popularize the doctrines of the reformers amongst the learned—Melanchthon shows quite unmistakably that he was on some points under the direct influence of the great humanist. In the dispute between his master Luther and Erasmus over the question of Freewill he came in the end to side with Erasmus; an exceedingly important decision, since otherwise Lutheranism would have been burdened with the terrible doctrine of Predestination. Calvin, also, in his early years owed not a little to the writings of Erasmus, and indeed the biblical

[1] *Die Reformation* i., p. 349. Quoted by J. W. Richard in *Philip Melanchthon*, p. 137. When Melanchthon went to Wittenberg and placed himself under the direction of Luther he had an opportunity of going to Ingolstadt instead, where Luther's great opponent Eck was all powerful; Dr. Richard asks the very pertinent question: "What would Christendom be to-day had Melanchthon gone to Ingolstadt?" (Op. cit., p. 32.)

work of the latter, and to a lesser extent his editions of the Fathers, were a constant source of help to the reformers in their controversy with Rome. Luther himself, when as a young monk he approached Erasmus and desired his support, had not been unwilling to confess his world-wide sovereignty in the hearts of students and that his own mind was constantly in communion with that of Erasmus through his works (they were not personally acquainted) ; [1] but in later life he felt his influence to be dangerous, though even at the time of their controversy over Freewill he had to admit his services in the furtherance of the Gospel.[2]

(2) It is exceedingly hard to estimate the exact effect which Erasmus had within his own communion, for soon after his death his writings came under the condemnation of the official leaders of the Church, especially in Spain where some of his books were actually burnt, and since Spanish influence was for a long time predominant in the Vatican, to acknowledge any indebtedness to Erasmus would have been unwise from every point of view. None the less his power made itself felt and like a smouldering fire it was ever ready to break out, sometimes in the least expected quarters. It is usual, for instance, to regard the counter-Reformation and the rigid attitude of the Jesuits as due to a deliberate reaction against liberalism such as that of Erasmus (readers of Newman's *Apologia pro vita sua* will remember that the Oxford movement in

[1] See Note A, p. 128.

[2] See Note B, p. 128.

our own Church began in a similar reaction against liberalism), yet there are writers to be found, even amongst Roman Catholics, who find within the Society of Jesus itself the followers of Erasmus. Dr. Barry, for example, declares that "if Erasmus left no successor equal to himself, he trained a host of disciples or plagiarists in the Company of Jesus, where his memory has always evoked a fierce antagonism, and his writings have been put to the ban."[1] In like manner the reforms carried out by the Council of Trent had many of them been suggested by Erasmus, or were intended to remove abuses which he had revealed; and from the date of that Council the Church of Rome had never returned to that state of desperate corruption which marked it during his lifetime.

(3) In one exceedingly important sphere the name of Erasmus carried great weight—in the Court and amongst the ministers of Charles V. Gattinara, his most efficient chancellor,[2] was decidedly Erasmian in sympathy, as was his successor Granvelle. How far Charles allowed his political advisers to influence him in matters of religion is quite uncertain; I think that there can be but little doubt that the Emperor himself was a sincere and devout Catholic, and when at the Diet of Worms he announced to the assembled princes of Germany that he was resolved to devote to the cause of the Church all his dominions, his friends, his body

[1] *Camb. Mod. Hist.* i., p. 625.

[2] "Charles never had a more devoted or more popular minister." (Armstrong, op. cit. i., p. 35.)

and blood, his life and soul, he was for once revealing his deepest feelings. But this romantic devotion could not possibly be maintained for long towards a Church ruled by Popes such as were his contemporaries; and when Charles found that the Holy Father was in alliance against him with the French, and even with the Turk, his ardour was checked; and, in spite of his high-sounding avowals, he was compelled to make concessions to the Protestant leaders in order to retain their vital support. The Papacy was incurably dishonest, and it was the discovery of this fact which justified Charles in his own mind for adopting measures which he felt to be schismatic.[1] Many of Charles' own ideas in ecclesiastical matters, such as the need for purifying the Church, and for allowing more latitude in matters of belief, are in agreement with those of Erasmus. In the controversy which the Emperor was compelled to carry on with Clement VII in 1526, one of the documents put forward by him contained statements of which no follower of Luther need have been ashamed;[2] and since the pamphlet was drafted by a notorious Erasmian, Alphonso de Valdés, we may suppose that we have here yet another example of his influence.[3] At a somewhat later date when a Conference with the Protestants was arranged at Ratisbon (in 1541) two out of three of Charles' theological representatives,

[1] The whole subject of the relations of Charles with the Popes should be studied in Armstrong's two excellent volumes.

[2] Ranke, *Deutsche Gesch. im Zeit. der Reform.* ii., p. 265, "deren sich kein Anhänger Luthers zu schämen gehabt hätte."

[3] Pastor, *History of the Popes, etc.* (Eng. Trans.), ix., p. 354.

Gropfer and Pflug, were suspected by many of similar leanings.

(4) We now come to one of the most interesting parts of our subject—interesting above all to us in Cambridge—the impression produced by Erasmus upon England, and upon the peculiar form which the Reformation assumed in this realm.

Erasmus first visited England in 1499, and though his stay was of only brief duration, less than six months, his time in London and in Oxford enabled him to lay the foundations of valuable friendships with Colet and with More and others; friendships which were to be of the utmost importance for the future of religion, both here and on the Continent. In 1510 he came to this University as Lecturer in Greek, possibly as the first Professor of that subject, being invited by the famous Chancellor, Fisher Bishop of Rochester.[1] This invitation was partly a result of a revival of the study of sound learning and partly one of its manifestations. Other manifestations of the same spirit were to be found in the building of new colleges and the establishment of new professorships; in both of these forms of beneficent activity the Lady Margaret, acting under the influence of Bishop Fisher, her confessor, was especially prominent. Two colleges were founded or revived by her in Cambridge, Christ's (originally founded as God's House in 1442) being refounded in 1505 especially for the study of divinity, and St. John's founded in 1511, although not opened until July, 1516. Two

[1] See Note C, p. 128.

readerships in Divinity were also endowed by the same gracious hand, one at Oxford and one in our own University, to the latter Erasmus himself succeeded in 1511.[1] Another sign of the revived interest in religion was the erection of the famous church in which we are assembled this afternoon; Great St. Mary's was built in 1506 and Erasmus may well have been amongst the earliest of those who worshipped in it. But though his time here was of such remarkable importance for the future of the University and of the country in general,[2] yet it was for Erasmus himself a period of disappointment and unhappiness, and it ended in gloom and hasty flight. His last days at Queen's have been vividly described by the historian of our University in a passage which has often been quoted:

"The final glimpse that we gain of Erasmus at Cambridge . . . is that of a solitary, isolated scholar, prematurely old with anxiety and toil, weighed down by physical suffering, dejected by disappointment, and oppressed with debt; rarely venturing beyond the college gates, and then only to encounter hostile or indifferent glances; while all around there waited for him an invisible foe—the pestilence that walketh at noon-day; often by night

[1] It is not generally known that the epitaph on Lady Margaret's tomb in Westminster Abbey was composed by Erasmus, he was paid 20s. for the task. (See C. H. Cooper, *Memoir of Margaret, Countess of Richmond and Derby*, pp. 124 and 200—(quoted in P. S. Allen, *Eras. Epist.* ii., p. xix).

[2] Lord Acton considered that the best portion of the English Church in the early sixteenth century consisted of the followers of Erasmus, of whom he regarded Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, as the chief. (See *Historical Essays and Studies*, p. 18.)

in his study high up in the south-west tower, 'out-watching the Bear' over the pages of St. Jerome, even as Jerome himself had out-watched it many a night, when transcribing the same pages in his Bethlehem cell, some eleven hundred years before. Then winter came on, and towards the close of each shortening day Erasmus could mark from his window the white fogs rolling in from surrounding marshes, reminding him of the climate he most of all disliked—the climate of his native Holland—while day after day the sound of footsteps in the courts below grew rarer and rarer. At last the gloom, the solitude, the discomfort, and the panic, became more than he could bear; and one night the customary lamp no longer gleamed from a certain casement in the south-west tower. And when the fear of the plague was over, and the University returned, it was known that Erasmus had left Cambridge; and no doubt many a sturdy defender of the old learning said he was glad to hear it, and heartily hoped that all this stir about Greek, and St. Jerome, and errors in the Vulgate, was at an end." [1]

But any such hopes which may have been cherished were not destined to be realized, for the power of Erasmus and of his writings was to be a potent factor in the religious controversies of his times, and already, had they but known it, he had almost completed the first draft of his text of the New Testament. Before

[1] J. P. Mullinger, *Univ. of Camb.*, p. 506; quoted by Jourdan, *Catholic Reform in the Early XVI Century*, pp. 130 f.

leaving the subject of the influence of Erasmus in England it may be worth while to mention that in the reign of Edward VI the command was made that copies of the *Paraphrase* should be placed in every parish church in England.[1] There is also a certain fitness to be observed in the translation by Tinsdale of Erasmus' *Enchiridion* as a forerunner of his English Bible.[2]

On the whole one cannot help believing that Erasmus would have approved of our English Reformation had he lived to see it, especially in its later stages; and the description of its aims and ideals as sketched by Dr. Headlam in his recent Bampton Lectures might almost have come from the pen of Erasmus himself. "The ideal of many of our reformers," he says, "had been the transformation of our institutions by an appeal to reason and history rather than the assertion of a rigid and narrow dogmatic standpoint. We have avoided any violent break with the past and have been singularly distrustful of a narrow standpoint." [3]

The appeal to reason and history has always marked our Church in the periods of her strongest life—to-day perhaps we are in danger of forgetting this fact—and it would seem that it is not necessary for the Church of England that she should have a larger body of clergy

[1] See Note D, p. 129.

[2] For the influence of Erasmus upon Tindale and Coverdale see Westcott, *The History of the English Bible*, pp. 179 and 257.

[3] *The Doctrine of the Church and Reunion*, p. 196. In an earlier work Dr. Headlam pointed out that the Reformation in England was marked by the prevalence of a sober and wise learning which rose superior to political controversy and religious fanaticism. (*History, Authority, and Theology*, p. 40.)

than at present or even one so large; but that it is necessary that those whom she commissions should be fitted both by character and attainments for the high task of spiritual leadership which she lays upon them.

II

In studying the controversies of the sixteenth century one cannot fail to notice the way in which the various parties who were anxious for the purification of the Church and of doctrine—whether they were out-and-out Papalists or pure Protestants—looked to Erasmus as a possible leader and guide. And yet he seemed to be content to stand aside and to make no attempt to put himself at the head of the reforming movement. But if Erasmus, like his friend More, was "a man of Meroz," as Professor Gwatkin once called him,[1] he was so deliberately and for reasons which satisfied himself; we must never think of him, as amongst those who are "saddened perpetually by the shadows upon them of the great things from which they shrink." [2]

The situation in which a man finds himself is oft-times the preceptor of his duty, even though like Hamlet he shrink from his responsibilities, but it must not be forgotten that the form which his response assumes will be conditioned by his natural powers and disposition. We must bear this in mind when passing judgment on Erasmus, for he was unfitted both by

[1] *Church and State in England, etc.*, p. 139.
[2] W. Pater, *Renaissance*, p. 58.

character and temperament for the position of leader of a revolution, and could never have made that popular appeal to the masses which such an office demands from one who holds it.

(1) In the first place he had an intense dislike of controversy of any kind, even of controversy for the truth; his enemies said of him that he preferred to have peace under anti-Christ rather than warfare under Christ. He was indeed, in his own words, no "gladiator of the arena." In a long letter written to Laurinus, Dean of St. Donatian's at Bruges, he takes the opportunity of making his defence against the many attacks which were then being levelled at him. "I cannot help hating dissension and loving peace and harmony," he says; "I see how obscure all human affairs are. I see how much easier it is to stir up confusion than to allay it." [1] In yet another place he pleads that dispute points should be left "to the blessed time when we shall see God face to face." [2]

(2) In a well-known passage Horace has described, with matchless skill, the bright star of the great twin brethren shining in the high heavens far removed from the dread and terrors which threaten the storm-tossed mariner; in some such ways did Erasmus, in the lone splendour of his assured pre-eminence in the world of learning, seem "to hang aloft the night" and to gaze down upon the strife and tumult of his time, and to do so without the power or ability to "lull the threatening wave." [3]

[1] Quoted by Emerton, *Desiderius Erasmus*, pp. 347 ff.
[2] In his Preface to Hilary. [3] Horace, *Carm.* I., xii., 25 ff.

A man of thought rather than a man of action, he suffered from all the limitations which the distinction suggests, and like many another who has from the highest motives decided to be "a looker-on of this world's stage" and not a "sharer in its burdens," he sometimes gave way to the temptation of being critical when he ought to have been constructive, cynical when the struggles of his contemporaries called at least for compassion.

But though Erasmus preferred the happy tranquillity of a private station to positions of importance with their attendant pomps and pageantries, their cares and perils, he must not be regarded as one who had no interests outside the problems of scholarship; many indeed there were in that age who made it their object in life "to write pure Latin . . . and leave the world to its own abuses," but Erasmus must not be numbered amongst them. None the less he seemed to be taking but little part in the warfare of the day—as the mob understood warfare—and he had not that energy and emotional fire which can quicken and inspire large bodies of men. For the successful reformer, if he is not fortunate enough to find the atmosphere of a temperature suitable to his projects, must be able by his own efforts to raise it. Luther is an admirable example of one possessing this gift, and at times he seemed, in his zeal, not to care how coarse or how violent he became, realizing only too well that vulgarity and violence were popular and served to intimidate his opponents. Hence Luther was feared by the authorities at Rome,

whereas Erasmus was always tolerated and sometimes even patronized.

(3) In 1506 Erasmus paid his first visit to Italy, and to lighten the tedium of the passage of the Alps, he wrote a poem *De senectutis incommodis*,[1] for though at the time only about forty, he felt already that old age was close at hand. This was fifteen years before the Diet of Worms, and a consideration of his feelings warns us that before we criticize Erasmus for want of fire and zeal during the first outbreak of the Reformation, we must recollect something of his circumstances at that time. When the protest against Indulgences was made he was more than fifty years of age ; his constitution, always weakly, had suffered much from the strain of continuous study, from the hardships of his youth, and from the fatigue of long and difficult journeys ; he was in reality an old man before his time. Strangely enough his age and the feebleness of his health constituted one of the arguments which were used by the painter Albrecht Dürer when urging Erasmus to step into the place left vacant by Luther's disappearance after the Diet of Worms. He who took that unenviable post must needs be one for whom life held but few attractions and whose hold upon it was but slight.

(4) There is a popular expression which tells us that the onlooker sees the finer points of the game. Erasmus' detachment and tranquillity at all events enabled him to see the lighter side of even the serious condition of the

[1] The full title is *Carmen ad Gulielum Copum Basiliensem de senectutis incommodis*, and it may be found in his *Opera* iv., pp. 755 ff.

times, and he could take a keen delight in its occasional humour. To the grim leaders of Protestantism such an attitude and such an outlook were the sure signs of lack of real conviction and earnestness, and Luther, before his great quarrel with Erasmus, condemned him as "making fun of the faults and miseries of the Church of Christ instead of bewailing them before God with deep sighs."[1] I sometimes think that in this as in many other things Erasmus found a later counterpart in Bishop Creighton, who at all times was apt to puzzle those who knew him only slightly, by his seeming frivolity, especially in the tense atmosphere of the Cambridge of forty years ago "when any approach to humour" in the discussion of serious subjects had the effect of "a slight magnetic shock to the company."[2]

(5) To many people the writings of Erasmus appear to be lacking in spirituality; they feel some amount of sympathy with St. Ignatius Loyola, the fiery soul who found his ardour cooled by reading the *Enchiridion*.[3] It may be that this is due to his never having undergone any great spiritual convulsion such as those who changed the lives of Loyola and Luther, that he is not in William James', or rather Francis Newman's, terminology, a "twice-born" soul. But when this has been admitted it is still possible to find in almost all his works a deep, underlying sense of the highest realities; and those which are avowedly devo-

[1] Quoted by Dr. Murray, *Erasmus and Luther*, p. 71; see further app. Note E, p. 130.

[2] See Note F, p. 130.

[3] See Note G, p. 131.

tional—though they may not be worthy to stand beside great masterpieces of the spiritual life such as the *De Imitatione Christi* or Law's *Serious Call*—are yet far above the average of such manuals, and what they lack in sentiment is more than compensated for by the exceedingly practical and sensible spirit which pervades them.

(6) The successful reformer again must have a limited programme, he must not confuse his followers by denouncing or condemning abuses which they have not yet the ability to realize as such; he must not, in other words, be too far in advance of his times. Here, too, Erasmus was found wanting, for he was one of those rare spirits who, as the poet says, "breathe the sweet air of futurity,"[1] one of those who see long before their fellows the things that belong unto their peace. Such men do not form the stuff from which practical reformers are made. In an age which regarded war and conquest as the highest of callings the writer of *The Complaint of Peace*[2] found but an unsympathetic audience, and in trying to efface what Dr. A. W. Ward has termed "the futile distinction between political and Christian morality."[3] Erasmus was not only in advance of his own age, but one sometimes fears of ours as well.

(7) But if Erasmus was in advance of his age in the attitude which he took up to questions such as those of war and peace, in some other

[1] Wordsworth, *The Excursion* ix., 25.

[2] The full title is *Querela Pacis undique gentium eiectae profligataeque*, to be found *Opera* iv., p. 625.

[3] In *Camb. Mod. Hist.* i., p. 461.

respects he was behind it. To the very end of his life those whom he felt at the bottom of his heart to be really worthy of consideration were scholars like himself—not that he ignored entirely the common people ; we remember his desire that they should have a real and intimate knowledge of the Scriptures[1]—and his writings were intended primarily for them ; the Greek New Testament of Erasmus is as typical in its way as the German Bible of Luther. Although he had a great and remarkable insight into the movements of contemporary thought, he failed to discern some of the most important developments of the times ; the world which he really understood was the dying world of the Middle Ages[2] with its one universal empire, and its one universal language, that Latin tongue which was his own mother tongue and probably the only medium in which he could express himself at all freely.[3] He had but little conception of the force of what we now call public opinion, of the casting vote of the "man in the street."

As we saw above,[4] Erasmus did not merit the condemnation which W. B. Yeats passed upon one of his friends, that he "loved his learning more than mankind," but on more than one occasion he showed a touch of intellectual aristocracy which was not far removed from snobbishness. A rather amusing example is

[1] See above p. 77.

[2] Just as St. Augustine perhaps belongs to the ancient world rather than to the Middle Ages. Cf. the discussion in J. N. Figgis, *The Political Aspects of S. Augustine's "City of God,"* pp. 2 ff.

[3] See Note H, p. 132.

[4] See p. 96 ; the quotation which follows is from *Wild Swans at Coole*, p. 5.

contained in his own account of the contempt with which he treated a supposed merchant whom he met at dinner in the house of one of his friends; the merchant turned out to be Cardinal Canossa, the papal legate who was visiting England incognito. Erasmus was much annoyed when he afterwards found out his mistake, but the Cardinal thought none the worse of him for it and on more than one occasion tried to advance his fortunes.

III

These weaknesses of temperament and character explain quite fully the failure of Erasmus to take that lead in the reformation of the Church which was expected of him by his contemporaries. My reason for dwelling upon these weaknesses at some length is, first, that we may have as complete a conception of his character as is possible; and secondly, that as in the case of Protestantism,[1] we may learn from his faults as well as from his strength.

Mr. Gladstone used to say that "men ought not to suffer from disenchantment. They ought to know that ideals in politics are never realized."[2] The same warning is necessary for the religious reformer, and a recognition of its truth will often save him from despair, and from what is worse, the adoption of desperate and questionable methods of bringing about his ideals. Not that he should be willing for a moment to reconcile himself to the idea of final failure—

[1] See above, pp. 47 ff.
[2] *Life*, by John Morley (1911 edn.), iii., p. 357.

that were a faithless and discouraging attitude of mind—but he must be prepared to believe that it may be reserved for him to follow the pillar of fire and cloud only to perish in the wilderness; others will joyfully share in that entry into the promised land which his courage and endurance have helped to make possible. And surely this is the highest blessedness, for in the words of the patient suffering man from whom the figure is borrowed, "to travel hopefully is better than to arrive, and the true success is to labour." [1]

In Erasmus we have exactly this type of labourer, the type that is, of one who worked on quietly and patiently without any real hope of success within his own lifetime. He stands before us as an example of a man who was intensely dissatisfied with the Church of his baptism, yet of one who refused to be moved by the threats of enemies within her communion, or by the invitations of friends and allies outside; he remained loyal to her and to the truth as he conceived it, content to wait until others shared in the revelation which had been vouchsafed to his awakened eyes. By patient continuing in well-doing he tried to put to shame the ignorance of foolish men.

A summing-up of the life of Erasmus, in its strength and in its weakness, contains lessons of inestimable value for those who are endeavouring to meet our present discontents. It shows us the need for learning and understanding, for patience and insight in our leaders;

[1] R. L. Stevenson, *Virginibus Puerisque*, p. 120 and p. 96 (pocket edition).

for judgment without prejudice, and at the same time for convictions supported by that zeal which is so seldom found apart from prejudice; a reverence for the past and yet a refusal to be fettered by it; and a fearless attitude towards all abuses and corruptions however venerable, in belief and practice alike.

Lessons such as these have to be applied to the urgent task of the restatement, or perhaps it would be better to say, to the readjustment of belief. I prefer the latter word, because speaking for myself I do not desire the introduction of fresh or revised formularies; for since no possible combination of language could represent adequately divine truth or anticipate the growth of human knowledge, such formularies would themselves be obsolete long before they had gained universal acceptance. Our present creeds come down to us with all the prestige of an ancient tradition behind them, and quite apart from this advantage, they have much to commend them, for since they were produced in an age so different from our own and by men whose knowledge was in very many respects so much narrower, no reasonable person can imagine that we use the words with their original connotation.[1]

Nor again am I convinced that we need exact definitions upon all the great mysteries of the faith, and here I find myself in agreement with Canon Streeter, who is of the opinion that "the idea that the plain man needs definition

[1] See Note I, p. 132.

more than he needs truth has been the degradation both of politics and religion." [1]

What we require is not a number of elaborate definitions or official formularies, but the relating of new knowledge to religious truth; a long and gradual process in the course of which experiments will have to be made by individuals, many of whose results may be wrong or misleading, or which will appear to be dangerous to the timidly orthodox; and some no doubt by their very novelty will shock even the elect. But the theologian, if real progress is to be made, must claim the scientist's right to put forward, for the purposes of discussion and testing, hypotheses which may well prove in the end to be unsound or defective.

IV

The age of great men is passed away, and we are told that no more shall we find giants of the stature of Erasmus and Luther to lead us in our wanderings. It may be that the general level of culture and attainment is now so much higher that the great men do not rise to so prominent an altitude above their fellows as in former days; just as a mountain peak seems of only moderate height when seen from an upland valley. The field, too, of knowledge is now so vast that no man may presume to think of claiming more than a working

[1] *Restatement and Reunion*, p. 52. Cf. the statement by F. W. Maitland that 'the love of simplicity has done vast harm to English Political philosophy," quoted in *Memoir* by H. A. L. Fisher, p. 11.

knowledge of any part outside his own special province.

In the work of reconstruction, therefore, the labour of many minds and of many pens is needed; we are not to despair because no Erasmus is with us to do the vast work almost unaided, but each of us working in his own particular department is to do his own small task, striving all the while to keep in touch with fellow-labourers in different portions of the same great field; for though as individuals we can only see the parts and deal with them as parts, yet we can and must be like him of whom the poet speaks,

> " who looks
> In steadiness, who hath among least things
> An under-sense of greatest; see the parts
> As parts, but with the feeling of the whole."[1]

In three spheres of life and thought there would seem to be an urgent demand for the Church to advance her work of readjustment and reconciliation; in the intellectual or scientific; in the social or political; and in the æsthetic.

(1) In the first of these departments much has already been done, and much is being done; the most pressing need is perhaps for a more organized and sustained attempt to spread abroad amongst the multitude results and ideas which are commonplaces amongst scholars. The untrained and ignorant mind is very apt to be misled by some casual notice in the daily press or by an article in a popular magazine; and so we get the strange phenomenon of

[1] Wordsworth, *Prelude* vii., 733 ff.

scientific hypotheses often becoming popular superstitions long before their truth or even their probability has been established.

The old futile struggle between science and religion, with its foolish talking on the one side as on the other, has now, one hopes, gone to its long home; the whole situation has changed since the middle of the last century, for, as Goldwin Smith has pointed out, Professors of geology are no longer driven to shifts in their efforts "to reconcile geology with Genesis. The effort now is to reconcile Genesis with geology."[1] But though the opposition of science and religion is for nearly all thinking people now over, it must be recognised that the effect of certain applied sciences in the direction of invention and discovery has been quite unconsciously of disservice to religion. These inventions and discoveries have been the means—I think the figure was first used by M. Bergson—of giving mankind a larger and much more efficient body to which his soul has not yet been adjusted. In other words they have brought comfort and luxury so much nearer men that religion is apt to be forgotten and ignored.

(2) In the political world there is a call to a more general study and understanding of the hopes and ideals of the rising democratic movement; and for the Church's support to be given to the better spirits in the movement

[1] *Reminiscences*, p. 67. Goldwin Smith attended the lectures of Buckland and Sedgwick. It must be remembered, however, that "only in 1835 did the congregation of the Index withdraw heliocentric books from its list." (Baron Friedrich von Hügel quoted by Inge, *Outspoken Essays*, p. 235.)

who are definitely desirous of basing it, consciously or otherwise, upon principles which are at bottom those of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the same time there is urgently needed a restatement of His teaching in terms of present-day social ideas; for the accomplishment of such a task of co-operation of the leaders of organized labour is almost essential, in fact it must be confessed with shame that in certain directions they have already outdistanced the Church; in the words of Erasmus' present successor as Lady Margaret Reader: "The democracy of to-day is Christian in its valuation of personality and its conception of a regenerate human society." [1] In undertaking this service the Church and her representatives will need to exercise much caution; for when labour was weak and oppressed the Church seemed content to stand by without insisting, except through the isolated voices of a few of her members, that its rightful claims should be admitted; now that labour is strong the Church's sudden awareness of its interests is not altogether unsuspected in the minds of many of the democracy. But there remains much yet to be done; for, in spite of all attempts at amelioration, the modern industrial system with its long hours and monotonous and deadening duties still slowly separates whole sections of the community from the enjoyment of their true heritage; they became incapable of appreciating those treasures of wisdom and know-

[1] J. F. Bethune-Baker, *The Faith of the Apostles' Creed*, p. 196. The quotation continues: "but it is not 'orthodox' in its beliefs, and there is no chance of its ever becoming 'orthodox' in the sense in which the word has been used in the past."

ledge, of art and beauty which, because they are the gifts of the Almighty Father Himself, are the inalienable birth-right of all His children. Wordsworth saw this clearly in the early days of the system and pointed out its dangers :

> " Our life is turned
> Out of her course, wherever man is made
> An offering, or a sacrifice, a tool
> Or implement, a passive thing employed
> As a brute mean, without acknowledgment
> Of common right or interest in the end ;
> Used or abused, as selfishness may prompt.
> Say, what can follow for a rational soul
> Perverted thus, but weakness in all good,
> And strength in evil."[1]

Further advance will only come as all men of goodwill, whatever their political or religious creed, learn to overcome their differences and misunderstandings, and enter into loyal agreement with one another until the desired goal is reached.

(3) During the past few years we have been reminded unceasingly that ultimate reality is to be sought along the lines of righteousness, and truth, and beauty ; [2] and that to neglect any one of these ways of approaching God means that our conception of Him will be disproportionate. The Church has perhaps concerned herself most chiefly with the first of these avenues to God, and in propagating

[1] *Excursion* ix., 113 ff.

[2] See especially *The Ultimate Belief*, by A. Clutton-Brock. The Bishop of Manchester in *Mens Creatrix* has attempted to show how " the four philosophical sciences (i.e. those of Knowledge, Art, Morality, and Religion) are found to present four converging lines which do not in fact meet." By working back from the Incarnation we find " just what was needed, the point in which these converging lines meet and find their unity." Dr. Temple's book is a necessary supplement to Mr. Clutton-Brock's.

ideas of His righteousness she has not always been as desirous of discovering His truth, especially if it seemed to contradict her traditional beliefs, as some of her friends would desire; whilst the pursuit of beauty has been oft-times entirely forgotten or unrealized. There is ample scope, therefore, for those who possess the necessary gifts to use them in the development of our ideas of beauty as a revelation of God, so that we shall not merely regard it, as the manner of some is, as a kind of lure by which artistic souls shall be attempted to divine worship. There are certain priests, even in our own communion, who would find it hard perhaps to defend themselves against the accusation of a not very sympathetic critic, that they use art as "the more or less seductive panoply of mental poverty and spiritual barrenness." [1]

The Church in times past was the mother of artists and at her knees the poet breathed out his first half anxious prayer; but now artist and poet alike all too frequently flee from her approach. By what terrible mischance has a barrier been allowed to erect itself between those who are seeking God in the beautiful—for every sincere seeker after beauty is a seeker, knowingly or not, after God—and the Church which is the guardian of His more direct revelation of Himself. Is it because demands have been made upon the artist which he feels he cannot rightly meet; that restrictions have

[1] The quotation is from the Foreword to William Sharp's amazing *tour de force, The Pagan Review;* he, himself, wrote every article in the first (and only) number, using different pseudonyms: its motto was "sic transit gloria Grundi." (See *William Sharp (Fiona Macleod)—a Memoir*, pp. 200 ff.)

been laid upon him as to what constituted religion against which he revolts—as if the heavens could not declare the glory of God unless thay had painted upon them the awesome figure of the Ancient of Days ?

In the later developments of the Italian Renaissance, art, it is true, came under the domination of ideas which were not Christian, but the Church should not on that account have despaired of her own ability to influence art ; she ought not, as Francis Thompson puts it, "in place of lovingly reclaiming her" to "have cast her from the door to follow the feet of her pagan seducer." [1] Both art and religion have suffered from their separation. The Church has lost the service of those many with whom the religion of beauty is always "a passion and a power" ; whilst art has lost the chastening and purifying influence which comes from a lofty and unselfish ideal. Really great art cannot exist apart from religion, and the artist who does not regard himself as the priest of God may easily become the ready instrument of the powers of evil.[2]

V

So we need to include in our religion everything that pertains to life and thought ; and eventually to combine it in one all-inclusive system ; for though we may not approve wholeheartedly of the labours of the Schoolmen when tested by their results, yet must we admit that they were inspired by a noble and a necessary ideal.

[1] *Prose Works*, p. 1.

[2] See Note J, p. 132.

For just as the scientist comes to us with the doctrine of the uniformity of nature—a doctrine which we accept, be it remembered, not because it can be proved, but because it commends itself to us as reasonable and fitting—so in the world of intellectual studies we need the similar doctrine of the unity of knowledge; we need to believe that all branches of a true and genuine culture are linked each to each and bound, as it were, together like the members of a family. Theology, if it be worthy of the name, must be the Queen and the Mother of all the arts and of all the sciences, and it is for her "to adjust the various products of the human mind to one another in one many-sided type of intellectual culture," uniting "what man's ignorance had divided" and restoring "what time had made dim." [1]

My task is ended; I have tried by God's grace to put before you thoughts which have come to me in studying the history of a great movement in the past, thoughts which I dare to hope may be of some small use to those engaged in the tremendous labour of purifying the present and preparing the way for the future. One word only would I now add, a word of warning which can never be too often repeated: "Not by power, nor by might, but by my spirit, saith the Lord"; [2] not by perfect organization, not by exact definition, shall we bring in the kingdom of heaven; but by accepting for our own selves the finished work of Christ our

[1] W. Pater, op. cit., pp. 31 and 51. [2] Zech. iv. 6.

Saviour, and by opening our hearts to the sanctifying power of God the Holy Spirit. But none the less must we labour to perfect organization, to discover truth, and to make it manifest; that surely is one of the lessons that we learn from the great drama on Mount Carmel, it is when the altar is prepared and the victim slain that the fire of God descends at the prayer of His waiting servant.[1]

In this spirit and with this hope we can still hold fast our loftiest ideals, though the time of their realization may be afar off; still can we face with calmness those who mock and scoff at our purblind enthusiasms,

"Dreamers of dreams! we take your scorn with gladness,
Knowing that God beyond the worlds you see
Hath wrought the dreams that count with you for madness
Into the substance of the world to be."

[1] 1 Kings xviii.

APPENDED NOTES

LECTURE I

Note A. See p. 4.

The Birth of Erasmus. The circumstances surrounding the birth of Erasmus are exceedingly obscure. As to the year there is much contradictory evidence, since Erasmus himself was apparently uncertain of his own age: the date given in the text (1466) is that accepted by Dr. Richter in his *Erasmus-Studien* and also by Mr. Nichols in App. 5 to his edition of the *Epistles*, vol. i. The day, too, is a little uncertain, for though Erasmus kept the anniversary of his birth on October 28th, he says in the *Compendium vitae*, "Natus Rot. in vigilia Simonis et Iudae" (i.e. Oct. 27th). The one fact upon which it can most certainly be established is that it took place at Rotterdam, though even here absolute certainty cannot be reached, for the people of Gouda from early times claimed him for their town. However, they produce no evidence for the claim and the Venetian ambassador, Contarini, saw not only the house but even the room in which Erasmus was supposed to have been born at Rotterdam as early as 1540.

The popular idea of the birth of Erasmus is taken from Charles Reade's well-known novel, *The Cloister and the Hearth*, and is based on the *Compendium vitae* referred to above. This work is almost certainly the work of Erasmus himself, but the facts which it contains are not altogether to be relied upon, differing

as they do from the earlier account given in the letter to Grunnius (Allen, *Eras. Epist.* ii., pp. 291 ff.). In this earlier account details are given much less favourable to his parents, since he mentions an older brother the fruit of the same irregular connexion. As the real object of this letter was to obtain the papal dispensation from certain disabling conditions in his birth, the need for a full and careful statement is manifest. At a later period, when his brother was dead, he quietly left him out. That the father of Erasmus was a priest is not altogether evident in view of the statement in the letter from Pope Julius II : " Hinc est quod nos volentes te, qui, ut asseris, deffectum natalium pateris de soluto genitus et vidua " (see Allen, op. cit. iii., p. xxix.).

NOTE B. See p. 5.

Hellenism and the West. The attraction of the East for the West is a phenomenon which can be observed at almost all periods of history, exercising itself often enough with decisive results. The peculiar atmosphere of the medieval world would not have been what it was, but for the gulf which separated the Catholic West from the Orthodox East, though perhaps there was a greater amount of communication across this gulf than has sometimes been supposed ; e.g. the establishment in the early years of the thirteenth century of a college named Constantinople in the University of Paris, with the object of bringing over Greek students who would take back with them some of the ideas of the West and also bring Eastern learning into France.

In an earlier age still the attraction of the East nearly turned the whole fortunes of Europe, for there can be but little doubt that both Julius and Augustus each in turn came near to anticipating Constantine by moving the seat of the Empire to the East. This proposal aroused great opposition, and in " Vergil, in

Horace, in Livy, we hear the old Roman spirit uttering a profound refusal; a refusal which saved Western Europe, which gave it time to learn to be Christian while Rome still stood warden of the gate of the North."[1] It may be of interest to record the little known fact that Constans II (642–668) contemplated bringing back the seat of the Empire from Constantinople to Rome; a short visit to the latter city convinced him of the utter impracticability of the idea in face of Lombard opposition (See Paul. Diacon., *De Gestis Langobard.* Bk. V., ch. vi. ff. in Muratori, *Rerum Ital. Script.* i., pp. 478 ff.)

It has been remarked of Hellenism that, unlike other elements of modern culture, it is never absorbed in such a way as to lose its identity; its influence is ever present, but it remains a distinct tradition (Pater, op. cit., p. 209). This strong individuality of Greek culture may account in part for the striking fact that the Greek language has never been a mother of tongues, and like its own goddesses remains childless.

The extent to which Greek was studied in the West has been considerably exaggerated; according to Burckhardt (*Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien*, Eng. Trans., p. 195) it was chiefly confined to Florence and to the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries, and it was never so general as Latin scholarship. The effect of the revived study of antiquity, both Greek and Latin, was not altogether

[1] R. S. Conway, *New Studies of a Great Inheritance*, p. 61. The reference to Horace is of course to Odes III., iii., in which empire is promised to Rome on condition that Troy remains unbuilt. Dr. Conway says concerning this prohibiiton: "It was not till 1889 that its political reference was explained. Mommsen then pointed out that the Ode must be read as a definite comment upon a definite proposal, attributed to Julius Cæsar, as Suetonius tells us (Jul. 79), and entertained for a time by Augustus himself to change the seat of the empire" (op. cit., pp. 59 ff.). It is with great hesitation that I venture to challenge a statement by one of the foremost Latin scholars of the day, but I would venture to point out that Mommsen was anticipated by Le Fevre and Dacier in the eighteenth century and that their "ingenious conjecture" was already known to Gibbon. (See *Decline and Fall, etc.*, ch. xiii. Note 94.)

good since men came to despise the present and to "look to antiquity only for the solution of every problem, and consequently allowed literature to sink into mere quotation" (Burckhardt, op. cit., p. 204).

NOTE C. See p. 10.

Spain and the Importation of Silver. It is rather a curious fact that Spain should have been the silver producing country for the Phœnicians, and that the natives should have been treated by their foreign exploiters in much the same way as were the people of Mexico and Peru. Sudden influxes of wealth, such as that due to the discovery of silver, have often worked great, if transitory, political changes. The institution of tyranny in Athens, for example, was almost certainly "based on the rapid development of wealth and the concentration of capital in the hands of the tyrant." (R. S. Conway, op. cit., p. 220; see further P. N. Ure, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, xxvi. (1906), p. 131.)

NOTE D. See p. 11.

The Medieval Conception of Economics. The theory put forward in its most extreme form by Theo Sommerlad in *Das Wirthschaftsprogram der Kirche des Mittelalters*, that in the days before the Renaissance the Church had a definitely socialistic programme, based on the teaching of St. Augustine, is not supported by the evidence. That there was a different conception of economic life is undoubted, and in particular a different conception of the ownership of property. At the close of the Middle Ages "the Roman pagan conception of absolute property . . . triumphed. This idea, which is the foundation of modern capitalism, has been fraught with a thousand evils, from which even now the world is slowly and with many a struggle trying to recover. The 'reception,' as it is called,

of Roman Law in 1495 in Germany may be taken as the date when the Middle Ages came to an end and the Roman ideas of property had conquered the West." (See Figgis, *The Political Aspects of S. Augustine's "City of God,"* p. 99.)

NOTE E. See p. 12.

The Union of Italy. Burckhardt finds in the Papacy the chief obstacle during the Middle Ages to the realization of Italian unity, since "it was strong enough to hinder national unity . . . not strong enough itself to bring it about." (Op. cit., p. 4.) Machiavelli's passionate demand for a saviour to free and unite the nation met with no real response in the heart of the Italian people until last century, when in the words of Dr. Figgis, "Machiavelli's ideals triumphed by Machiavelli's own methods. Italy became united under the headship of Victor Emmanuel and the astute diplomacy of Cavour. There was a man after Machiavelli's own heart. He had his reward." (Op. cit., p. 102.)

NOTE F. See p. 13.

The Secularization of the Papacy. The well-known story of St. Thomas Aquinas and Innocent IV belongs to an earlier period, but it bears witness to the reaction in the best minds against the growing worldliness of the Popes. The two were standing outside the Lateran one day, so the story goes, watching bag after bag of treasure being carried within its gates. "You will notice," said the Pope, smiling, "that the day is gone when the Church could say, 'Silver and gold have I none'!" "Yes, Holy Father," the saint replied, "and the day is also gone when the Church could say to the lame man, 'Arise and walk'!"

NOTE G. See p. 14.

The Papal Officials. The dismissal of crowds of officials was one cause of the unpopularity of Adrian VI. In Creighton's words, "he carried out his domestic reforms in such a way that they seemed to be the economies of a miser who had no sense of the dignity of his position." (Op. cit., vi., p. 233.) A similar unpopularity was aroused by the Emperor Julian for exactly the same cause—one of the many parallels which are always presenting themselves between the Imperial and Papal rulers of Rome—"By a single edict," says Gibbon, "he reduced the palace of Constantinople to an immense desert, and dismissed with ignominy the whole train of slaves and dependents, without providing any just, or at least benevolent exceptions, for the age, the services, or the poverty, of the faithful domestics of the Imperial family." (Op. cit., ch. xxii.) In truth, the path of the reformer is a difficult one, and vested interests are the mountain which faith alone can remove.

NOTE H. See p. 14.

The Non-performance of Clerical Duties. This sacred duty of delegation, as it has been ironically called, goes back into very early times. William Fitz-Stephen in his *Life of St. Thomas of Canterbury* describes how the messenger who was sent over to London to serve the Bull of Excommunication on the Bishop of London went to High Mass at St. Paul's on the Feast of the Ascension, expecting to find him there; but he was disappointed, for the celebrant was not even the Dean nor a Canon but only a Vicar (quidam vicarius, Vitalis nomine, homo timoratus et honestus sacerdos). The messenger addressed him as follows: "Non est hic hujus sedis Episcopus, sed neque Decanus: video te hic ministrum Jesu Christi." See the full account in Giles' collection, vol. i., p. 257.

NOTE I. See p. 15.

The Degradation of the Papacy. The judgments which Creighton passed on successive popes is a record of the gradual degeneration of their office. "The serious charge against Sixtus (IV) is that he hopelessly lowered the moral standard of the Papacy. Other Popes had pursued secular ends . . . but while doing so they regarded the dignity of their office, and sought for decent pretexts for their actions. . . . In an age when faith was weak, when the old ideals had vanished and nothing had taken their place, it was a serious matter that self-seeking, intrigue, and effrontery should be too plainly visible to be overlooked in the acknowledged head of Western Christendom." (Op. cit. iv., pp. 133 ff.) Of Innocent VIII he says: "The general corruption of morals in Italy advanced unchecked during his pontificate. A Pope whose son and daughter were openly recognized in the Vatican could do nothing towards stemming the irregularities of the clergy." (Op. cit., p. 181.) Of Alexander VI he says, referring to the invasion of Charles VIII: "One of the results of the French invasion of Italy was that the nations beyond the Alps lost their superstitious respect for the Pope's sanctity." (Op. cit., p. 233.) It is noteworthy that Alexander was the first Pope to allow himself to be termed Deus. This furnishes another parallel with the Emperors (see note G), for after Augustus had refused to be deified in his own lifetime his successors copied his wise moderation, with the exception of Caligula and Domitian: it is the worst of mankind, not the best, who dare to usurp divine honours.

NOTE J. See p. 22.

Social Problems and Foreign Missions. This vast subject, the importance of which is coming more and more to be realized, has been ably treated by F.

Lenwood in *Social Problems and the East.* At a recent Conference in connexion with the Student Christian Movement, a speaker after referring to the presentation of Christianity to the Arab, went on as follows: "It is idle to invite him to know and love a God who entered our life to share and save it, so long as we interpret that salvation without reference to what in his experience are the most important functions of human life." (See *Christ and Human Need,* 1921, p. 87.)

LECTURE II

NOTE A. See p. 34.

The Papal Legates. Even as late as 1530, when Charles was striving to find some compromise which would bring religious peace to Germany, the chief enemy was still the Papal legate. "Campeggi," says Mr. Armstrong, "in his confidential letters to the Curia, kept reiterating that force was the only remedy." (Op. cit. i., p. 248.)

The appointment of unsuitable and even unacceptable representatives by the Vatican not seldom turned what might have been harmless differences of opinion into dangerous quarrels, and the mistakes of the Reformation period were anticipated more than once by earlier Popes. An example may be given in the appointment by Boniface VIII of a legate to Philip of France in the person of Bernard Saisset, Bishop of Pamiers, one of his own subjects of recent and doubtful allegiance. (See Milman, op. cit. vii., p. 105.) On the other hand it must be remembered that an acceptable legate might go beyond his instructions in his desire to please—as in the case of the Bishop of Sutri sent by Innocent III to Philip of Swabia (Milman, op. cit. v., pp. 208 ff.)—or be open to threats or bribes. (Cf. Radoaldus, Bishop of Porto, the legate of Nicholas I—op. cit. iii., pp. 159 ff. and 180 ff.)

NOTE B. See p. 48.

Protestants and the Church. There is an interesting comment in the *Life of Hugh Price Hughes* on this whole subject. In the Catechism issued by the Free Church Council the Holy Catholic Church is defined as follows: "It is that holy society of believers in Christ Jesus which He founded, of which He is the only Head, and in which He dwells by His Spirit; so that, though made up of many communions, organised in various modes, and scattered throughout the world, it is yet one in Him." On this definition Price Hughes has the following remarks:

"It will be noted," he says, "that this definition makes no reference whatever to the metaphysical abstraction entitled the 'Invisible Church,' which was invented in the sixteenth century. Of course, we all believe in the 'Invisible Church' in the sense that the Church Triumphant in heaven is a part of the true Church not visible on earth. As we often sing:

> 'One family we dwell in Him,
> One Church above, beneath,
> Though now divided by the stream,
> The narrow stream of death.'"

"But in Protestant controversy the 'Invisible Church' is used in a totally different sense, to describe some church of which every believer in Christ is a member, even when he totally neglects all the duties and obligations of practical fellowship with his fellow Christians. Anything more entirely opposed to the original purpose of Christ or the best interests both of the individual and of human society, I cannot imagine." Quoted by H. Scott Holland in *A Bundle of Memories*, pp. 150 ff.)

NOTE C. See p. 51.

Protestantism and Morality. The ultimate effect of the spread of Protestantism and of its invaluable and invariable accompaniment—the open Bible—was, of course, very different from that described in the text. The well-known passage at the beginning of Chapter VIII of J. R. Green's *Short History of the English People* is a trustworthy witness in this matter: "No greater moral change," he says, "has ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the meeting of the Long Parliament. England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible." After describing the effects of a constant study of the Bible on the literature and social life of the people, he goes on to say: "But far greater than its effect on literature or social phase was the effect of the Bible on the character of the people at large. Elizabeth might silence or tune the pulpits; but it was impossible for her to silence or tune the great preachers of justice, and mercy, and truth, who spoke from the book which she had again opened for her people. The whole moral effect which is produced nowadays by the religious newspaper, the tract, the essay, the lecture, the missionary report, the sermon, was then produced by the Bible alone. And its effect in this way, however dispassionately we examine it, was simply amazing. The whole temper of the nation was changed. A new conception of life and of man superseded the old. A new moral and religious impulse spread through every class."

NOTE D. See p. 53.

Protestants and Learning. The quotation in the text comes from a passage in Gwatkin's *Early Church History* ii., p. 167. The full passage is as follows:

" In strength and weakness, the average Christian of Alexandria was not unlike the narrower Evangelical of a century ago. He had the same reality, the same charity, the same love of long dull services, the same strange enthusiasms, the same timid clinging to rule, the same cowering terror of every new thought. From learning, says Clement, he abstained 'like the beasts which have no understanding.' He feared it like the song of the Sirens lest it should enchant him. Had not St. Paul spoken meanly of the wisdom of the world, and warned us against philosophy and vain deceit? What was the need of learning? Would not bare faith suffice? Celsus hardly caricatures these men when he represents Christians as saying, Do not examine; only believe. Learning is a bad thing. The greater the fool, the greater the sinner, the better the convert he makes."

It must be remembered, however, that it was not in Protestant bosoms only that this fear of learning sheltered itself. Cardinal Castellesi in his *De vera philosophia ex quattuor doctoribus Ecclesiae* " represents every scientific pursuit, indeed all human intellectual life, as useless for salvation, and even dangerous. Dialectics, astronomy, geometry, music, and poetry are but vainglorious folly. Aristotle has nothing to do with Paul, nor Plato with Peter; all philosophers are damned, their wisdom vain, since it recognised but a fragment of the truth and marred even that by misuse. They are the patriarchs of heresy; what are physics, ethics, logic, compared with the Holy Scriptures, whose authority is greater than that of all human intellect." (See *Camb. Mod. Hist.* ii., p. 5.)

LECTURE III

NOTE A. See p. 60.

The Conciliar Movement. The Eastern Church still has a belief in the Conciliar Movement. Dean Stanley tells us that: "Once a year on the first Sunday in Lent, called Orthodox Sunday, all the seven Councils are commemorated in one, the anniversary of the last: the service and ceremonial of the Church is made to reproduce the image of the ancient synods—bishops, presbyters, and deacons, seated round in the semicircular form in which the old pictures represent them. The Eastern Bishops still promise in the service of consecration to observe their decrees; and not only in their memory preserved is learned or ecclesiastical circles, but even illiterate peasants, to whom, in the corresponding class of life in Spain or Italy, the names of Constance or Trent would probably be quite unknown, are well aware that their Church reposes on the basis of the Seven Councils, and retain a hope that they may yet live to see an eighth General Council, in which the evils of the time will be set right." (*Eastern Church*, Lect. II, § 1.)

NOTE B. See p. 62.

Freedom in Matters of Faith. A great teacher of the last century, Dean Church, had the same misgivings in regard to the desire for completely defining all things. At the time of the publication of J. B. Mozley's *Primitive Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration* he wrote to a friend: "In the Middle Ages, and much more in the early times of the Church, there was infinitely more free speculation than seems compatible with Church views now. I think it must be we who are wrong. The nature of things seems more in favour of the old way than of ours." (*Life and Letters*, p. 173.)

Shortly afterwards he wrote to Mr. Mozley himself: "I am very glad you worked the point well about ignorance. I never should be a metaphysician; but the way in which assumptions excite no question, and people go on spinning arguments, as if the whole invisible world was as easy to be understood as the theory of the steam-engine has long been one of my standing wonders. The idea of perfect and absolute knowledge, which is involved in so much of what is said and taught on all sides, becomes daily more and more unendurable to me." (Op. cit., p. 174.)

NOTE C. See p. 66.

Denunciations of the Papacy. Attacks such as that quoted in the text must not be taken to infer disloyalty to the Papacy as an institution, for as Dean Church once wrote: "It is confusing the feelings of the Middle Ages with our own, to convert every fierce attack on the Popes into an anticipation of Luther. Strong language of this sort was far too commonplace to be significant. No age is blind to practical abuses, or silent on them; and when the Middle Ages complained, they did so with full-voiced and clamorous rhetoric, which greedily seized on every topic of vilification within its reach. It was far less singular, and far less bold, to criticise ecclesiastical authorities, than is often supposed; but it by no means implied unsettled faith, or a revolutionary design." (*Dante*, p. 128.) One of the fiercest and best known denunciations of ecclesiastical authorities was that of St. Dominic, when as a simple monk he met the Papal legates returning discomfited, yet in great splendour, from their mission to the Albigensians. The cause of their failure was apparent to the eye of the future saint, and his indignation burst forth in words which have become memorable: "It is not by the display of power and pomp, cavalcades or retainers and richly houselled

palfreys, or by gorgeous apparel, that the heretics win proselytes ; it is by zealous preaching, by apostolic humility, by austerity, by seeming, it is true, but yet seeming holiness. Zeal must be met by zeal, humility by humility, false sanctity by real sanctity ; preaching falsehood by preaching truth." (Milman, op. cit. vi., p. 13.)

NOTE D. See p. 60.

Pilgrimages. Many of the Fathers condemned Pilgrimages on account of obvious dangers, and even Erasmus' favourite St. Jerome could write to Paulinus from the Holy Land itself: "De Hierosolymis et de Britannia aequaliter patet aula coelestis."

Readers of the fiction of the past century may be reminded of the amusing interview between Tancred (in Disraeli's novel of that name) and Lady Bertie and Bellair, a fashionable society woman who was striving to maintain her hold over the brilliant young man by sympathizing with his ambition to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

"Our lot is cast in a material age," said Tancred.

"The spiritual can alone satisfy me," said Lady Bertie and Bellair.

"Because you have a soul," continued Tancred, with animation, "still of a celestial hue. They are rare in the nineteenth century. Nobody now thinks about heaven. They never dream of angels. All their existence is concentrated in steamboats and railways."

"You are right," said the lady earnestly ; "and you fly from it."

"I go for other purposes ; I would say even higher ones," said Tancred.

"I can understand you ; your feelings are my own. Jerusalem has been the dream of my life. I have always been endeavouring to reach it, but somehow or other I never got further than Paris."

NOTE E. See p. 68.

The True Cross. The multiplication of pieces of the Cross was a source of embarrassment to the relic-hunter, until (in the words of Gibbon), "it was found convenient to suppose that the marvellous wood possessed a secret power of vegetation; and that its substance, though continually diminished, still remaind entire and unimpaired."

NOTE F. See p. 70.

The Decay of Scholasticism. "The normal end of Scholasticism is a mummified philosophy of authority, in which there are no problems to solve, but a great many dead pundits to consult." (Inge, *Outspoken Essays*, p. 237.) Erasmus, and still more Colet, was not only opposed to the corrupt form of Scholasticism, but to the method itself. Commenting on Colet's denunciation of Aquinas—"If he had not been possessed with arrogance, he would not have defined everything with so much temerity and pride; and if he had not had something of the worldly spirit he would not have corrupted the whole doctrine of Christ with his profane philosophy"—Bishop Gore remarks: "This is no doubt a hard unsympathetic judgment on Aquinas personally, but coming from a man like Colet it is an important judgment on the method which he represents. The experience of the scholastic system inspired in Colet's mind a passionate desire to return to simplicity—to the Bible and the Apostle's Creed. And no one can interpret the Reformation rightly, on its religious side, who does not bear in mind the existence of a widespread and passionate desire to get back to the Christ of the Gospels and the primitive Church." (*Dissertations*, pp. 180 ff.)

LECTURE IV

Note A. See p. 87.

Luther's debt to Erasmus. See the letter written by him to Erasmus from Wittenberg on the 28th March, 1519. It begins as follows: "Toties ego tecum fabulor et tu mecum, Erasme, decus nostrum et spes nostra, necdum mutuo nos cognoscimus. . . . Quis enim est cuius penetralia non penitus occupet Erasmus, quem non doceat Erasmus, in quo non regnet Erasmus." (To be found in Allen, *Eras. Epist.* iii., p. 517.)

Note B. See p. 87.

Luther's condemnation of Erasmus. The following passage from Luther's *Tischreden* is quoted by Dr. Murray, *Erasmus and Luther*, p. 228. "Erasmus hatte des Evangelii wohl können dienen und nütze sein . . . hats aber nichts gethan . . . 'Arius sucht nicht Gottes Ehre.'" But even this grudging admission is neutralized by a further passage from the same work (see Murray, p. 229), in which he says: "Erasmus ist ein sondlicher Feind und Widersacher Christi. . . . Das lasse ich nach mir im Testament, und dazu nehme ich Euch zu Zeugen, dass ich Erasmum für den höchsten Feind Christi halte, als keiner in tausent Jahren nicht gewest ist."

Note C. See p. 90.

Erasmus in Cambridge. Erasmus had already paid a visit to Cambridge in 1505–6 as is proved by a MS. in the possession of Queens' College, which contains the following entry: "1505. Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus fuit pensionarius 21° Henrici sept." Of this visit little is known, and it forms one of those

blank periods in the life of Erasmus which will always excite the curiosity of scholars. It is improbable that he was appointed *Professor* of Greek in 1511 although he undoubtedly lectured on the subject. Croke, in his *Oration in Praise of Greek Learning*, makes the following statement in reference to Erasmus : " quem vos olim habuistis Greacarum literarum professorem, utinamque potuissetis retinere." See Hallam, *Lit. Hist.* i., p. 294, note.) Croke's language is not sufficiently definite to build upon and the first Regius Professor was John Cheke appointed in 1540.

NOTE D. See p. 93.

The " Paraphrases " of Erasmus. The order that a copy of the *Paraphrases* of the Gospel (so much as was then available) should be placed in every church beside the Bible, and that all the clergy below the degree of B.D. should obtain a copy was first made in 1547, it was renewed with a few alterations in 1559. The order was severely criticized in some quarters, and in language which has a curiously modern ring about it. Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, after denouncing the whole work as an " Abomination," both on account of " the malice of Erasmus, and the arrogant ignorance of the translator, who knows neither Latin nor English," goes on to complain that " these new injunctions lay upon the realm a charge of twenty thousand pounds to buy the book." (See Dixon, *Hist. of the Church of England* ii., p. 451.) It is interesting to notice that the translation of part of St. John's Gospel was undertaken by the Princess Mary (afterwards Queen). The extent to which the order was obeyed is far from certain, the book is missing from many early Inventories of Church Property, but since books were often omitted from such lists this is no evidence one way or the other. That there was a copy in Great St. Mary's Church is proved by the entry of purchase

in the Churchwardens' Accounts (I am indebted to Dr. Pearce, the Master of Corpus, for knowledge of this entry), and in the parish Church at Yeovil the actual copy itself is still to be seen.

Note E. See p. 98.

The Seeming Frivolity of Erasmus. It must be admitted that Erasmus, judged by modern standards, is not always quite reverent; but it is hardly just so to judge him. The different taste of the times may be illustrated by a letter written to Erasmus, then suffering from an attack of stone, by Archbishop Warham; it would be hard to imagine it as coming from any recent occupant of the Metropolitan See. "Erasme, si valentibus dicimus salutem in capite literarum, multo magis conuenit aegrotanti tibi optare salutem; tametsi fausto omine auguror te iampridem calculis purgatum, saltem posteaquam celebrauimus memoriam purgationis Mariae. Quid sibi volunt saxa in corpusculo tuo? aut quid super hanc petram inaedificandum est? non enim construendo es magnificas domos vel eiusmodi quippiam, ut opinor. Quocirca quum non sint e re tua calculi, cures quamprimum te superfluo onere liberare, desque pecuniam ut auferantur hii lapides; secus quam ego quotidie do pecuniam, ut lapides afferantur ad mea aedificia. Id quod ut facilius facias nec tibi desis, dedi filio cuiusdam aurifabri Londoninensis decem nobiles, quos in decem legiones mutatos velim. Id auri pharmacum nonnihil energiae in se continet; eo utere ad salutem, quam tibi emere multo pluris cupiam."

An example of Erasmus' humorous turn of mind is still preserved in the copy of *Econium Moria* in the public library at Basle. The illustrations are by Holbein the Younger (who first visited England with a letter of introduction to More written by Erasmus), and he has not scrupled to score off his friend when

occasion offered ; for example, the " ragged mendicant scholar " is obviously drawn from the author himself. Erasmus has written several witty remarks in the margins and one of them is evidently his revenge on the artist, opposite the description of the " drunken profligate " are the words *Holbeinus ipse.*

NOTE F. See p. 98.

Creighton and Erasmus. The quotation is from *Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton* i., p. 297. Mrs. Creighton tells us (op. cit. ii., p. 86) that the Bishop " was not much in sympathy with Luther," and that " Erasmus was far more congenial to him." Had Creighton had the opportunity of devoting the same amount of attention to Erasmus as he did to Luther—for the last volume of his *History of the Papacy*—we should no doubt have had a really satisfactory life of the former, a work which still remains to be written.

NOTE G. See p. 98.

Loyola and the "Enchiridion." Froude states that " Ignatius Loyola once looked into Erasmus's New Testament, read a little, and could not go on. He said it checked his devotional emotions." (*Life and Letters of Erasmus* (Silver Library), p. 130.) There can be but little doubt that there is a confusion here between the New Testament and the *Enchiridion,* since the same thing is said about Loyola's attitude to that manual. The mistake is unfortunate, as it suggests that the founder of the Society of Jesus held the New Testament in small esteem ; it is taken in this way by Dr. Glover in a comparison which he draws between Ignatius and Luther, much to the advantage of the latter. (See *Jesus in the Experience of Men,* p. 248.)

NOTE H. See p. 100.

The "Querela Pacis." A new edition of this work from the translation of Thomas Paynell, under the title of "The Complaint of Peace," was published during 1917, the quadricentenary of the original issue; it was edited by Dr. Grieve of the United College, Bradford.

NOTE I. See p. 103.

The language of Erasmus. Erasmus apparently found a difficulty in expressing himself in any tongue except Latin, even his native Flemish came hardly to him, though we must beware of taking all his expressions quite literally. (See Froude, op. cit., pp. 38 f., and especially Richter, *Erasmus-Studien*, App. B, pp. xix ff.)

NOTE J. See p. 110.

The Revision of Creeds. Towards the end of the last of his *Three Introductory Lectures on the Study of Ecclesiastical History* Dean Stanley has the following striking passage: "It may be that the age for creating new forms of the Christian faith is past and gone, that no new ecclesiastical boundaries will henceforth be laid down amongst men. It is certain that in the use of the old forms is the best chance for the present . . . long experience, the course of their history, their age and dignity, have made them far more elastic, far more available, than any that we can invent for ourselves."

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

The Brethren of the Common Lot started at Deventer by Gerhard Groot	*c.* 1380
Lorenzo Valla exposes the "Donation of Constantine"	1440
The *De Imitatio Christi* written	*c.* 1441
The Portuguese reach Senegal	1445
Constantinople captured by Mohammed II	1453
BIRTH OF ERASMUS	1466
ERASMUS AT DEVENTER	1475–84
Death of Charles the Bold	1477
ERASMUS AT HERTOGENBOSCH	1484–87
Cape of Good Hope circumnavigated by Diaz	1486
ERASMUS MAKES HIS PROFESSION AT STEYN-IN-GOUDA	1488
Discovery of America	1492
Death of Lorenzo de' Medici	—
Election of Alexander VI	—
Charles VIII invades Italy	1494
ERASMUS IN PARIS, ETC.	? 1494–99
Vasco da Gama reaches Calicut	1497
Execution of Savonarola	1498
ERASMUS IN ENGLAND—MEETS COLET AND MORE	1499–1500
ERASMUS IN PARIS AND LOUVAIN	1500–4
PUBLICATION OF "ENCHIRIDION MILITIS CHRISTIANI"	1502
Election of Julius II	1503
ERASMUS IN LONDON AND CAMBRIDGE	1505–6
ERASMUS IN ITALY	1506–9
Accession of Henry VIII	1509
ERASMUS IN ENGLAND—LONG STAY AT CAMBRIDGE	1509–14

Colet founds St. Paul's School	1512
Election of Leo X	1513
ERASMUS AT BASLE	1514–15
ERASMUS PAYS A SHORT VISIT TO ENGLAND	1515–16
Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* published	1516
FROBEN PUBLISHES ERASMUS' "GREEK NEW TESTAMENT"	—
ERASMUS PAYS HIS LAST VISIT TO ENGLAND	1517
ERASMUS GOES TO LOUVAIN	—
Luther publishes his Theses	—
Melanchthon goes to Wittenberg	1518
Charles V elected Emperor	1519
Death of Colet	—
Luther excommunicated	1520
Diet of Worms	1521
ERASMUS SETTLES AT BASLE	—
Election of Adrian VI	1522
Election of Clement VII	1523
Beginning of Peasants' Revolt	1524
Battle of Pavia	1525
Sack of Rome	1527
DEATH OF FROBEN	—
Diet of Speier—the Protest	1529
Conference at Marburg	—
ERASMUS GOES TO FREIBURG IN THE BREISGAU	—
Diet and Confession of Augsburg	1530
Anabaptist rising at Münster	1534
Election of Paul III	—
Ignatius Loyola found the Society of Jesus	—
ERASMUS LEAVES FREIBURG AND RETURNS TO BASLE	1535
Calvin publishes the *Christianae Religionis Institutio*	1536
DEATH OF ERASMUS AT BASLE	—
Death of Luther	1546

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(This is perhaps the best Life of Erasmus that we possess; some of its statements require modification or correction in view of recent scholarship, and the author's bias against dogmatic religion must be allowed for.)

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(Suffers from inaccuracy in details and has an anti-Roman bias; but the author has entered as no one else into the spirit of Erasmus; his gifts of vivid imagination and ready wit giving him an advantage over other writers.)

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(An ideal edition of the letters of a great scholar. The notes and discussions are excellent and contain references to practically all recent work on Erasmus. A very full Bibliography is included.)

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(A number of interesting studies of contemporary institutions and ways of thought.)

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(Hibbert Lectures—perhaps the best general estimate of the Reformation in the language.)

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